

Monday, October 12, 1998

**Cake baked in light bulb oven wins contest**

NEW YORK — A cake baked in a light bulb oven won the contest for the best cake in the world, according to a contest held by the Light Bulb Oven Company.

**Explicit sex for teenagers causes outrage**

BIRMINGHAM — The Birmingham City Council has decided to remove explicit sexual references from its new guide to teenagers.

**Funny smell fire-fighters police**

WIMBORNE — Fire-fighters and police officers in Wimborne, Dorset, have been alerted to a strange smell that has been reported in the area.

**Older, infertile women might have babies**

WASHINGTON — A study by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, suggests that older, infertile women might have a higher chance of having a healthy baby.

**Clinton's cabinet wedding anniversary**

WASHINGTON — President Clinton's cabinet members celebrated their wedding anniversary on Monday.

### King Fahd congratulates Yemen

SANAA (AFP) — Saudi King Fahd congratulated Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh on an international panel ruling that awarded most of a disputed Red Sea archipelago to Yemen, SABA news agency said Sunday. "I have the pleasure of announcing my fraternal congratulations to you," the king wrote in a message to the Yemeni president. King Fahd said he hopes the decision "strengthens relations between the two neighbouring countries Yemen and Eritrea," which also claimed the Hanish islands, SABA said. A London-based international arbitration panel awarded Yemen the archipelago's major islands of Greater Hanish, Lesser Hanish and Jebel Zugar. They are located in the Red Sea close to the Gulf of Aden and control access to the Bab Al Mandab strait. Yemen and Saudi Arabia are conducting talks on defining the rest of their territorial and their entire maritime borders.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية - الراي

### U.S. commerce secretary delays Mideast trip because of U.S. budget

CAIRO (AP) — U.S. Commerce Secretary William Daley has postponed a trip to the Middle East because of the delay in approval of the new federal budget, the U.S. embassy said Sunday. Daley was to leave Washington on Sunday for visits to Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian territories. In Egypt, he was to be the keynote speaker at a trade and development conference Wednesday aimed at drawing foreign investment for some 40 Egyptian energy, transportation, chemical and water projects. A statement issued by the embassy quoted Daley as saying Congress had been expected to complete action on next year's U.S. government budget by Sunday. "Unfortunately, a budget agreement has not been reached," Daley said. "President Clinton has asked me to stay in Washington this week to assist in reaching an agreement with Congress." The statement said Daley hoped to reschedule the visit before the end of this year.

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## Turkey issues fresh warning to Syria

ANKARA (AFP) — Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz issued a fresh warning to Syria Sunday, saying Turkey would be free to take all measures against Damascus if the latter did not end its help for separatist Turkish Kurds. "If Syria does not make up its mind, we will make the sky collapse on it," Yilmaz told reporters during a trip to a town in eastern Turkey, according to the state-run Anadolu news agency. "If Syria ends its support to the separatist terrorists [the Kurdish Labour Party, or PKK], the terrorists cannot continue with their evil work," Yilmaz said. "We are determined to put an end to that terrorism and if Syria continues to ignore our warnings, we will be free to take all kinds of action," he said. Turkey and Syria have been engaged in a war of words since Ankara last month accused Damascus of providing separatist Turkish Kurds with military support and of sheltering their leadership. The Turkish government has threatened military action unless Syria hands over PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and ceases to back the PKK, which has been struggling to establish an independent Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey since 1984.

Syria denies the accusations. Turkish newspapers reported Sunday that a fresh series of explosions rocked several points on the Syrian side of the border with Turkey on Saturday, causing injuries, amid escalating tensions between the two neighbours. "It has been learned that some 3,000 PKK are escaping towards the Iraqi border. The explosions show their efforts to leave no traces behind them," the paper said. Officials at Turkey's General Staff were unable to confirm the report. Damascus on Saturday denied earlier claims by three Turkish newspapers that several blasts occurred on Friday in Syrian army bases and munitions warehouses and some electric power stations, causing an unspecified number of deaths and injuries. But the Istanbul dailies Cumhuriyet and Turkiye on Sunday reported fresh explosions on Saturday in four Syrian regions on the Turkish border. The reports could not be confirmed independently. The Turkish newspapers speculated that the explosions could have been caused by factions opposed to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad or could have been the work of secret service units within the Turkish army. But a Syrian official in Damascus on Saturday denied the explosion reports, telling AFP that they were "totally groundless."

### Turkey seeks support from Arab countries

ANKARA (R) — Turkey has called for support from Arab countries in its tense dispute with Syria over Ankara's charges that Damascus supports Turkish Kurd rebels. "We know that the Arab people do not think that way and we know that many state leaders are opposed to the support Syria gives to terrorism," Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem said in comments published in the Sabah newspaper on Sunday. "We want them [the Arabs] to behave in a way compatible with their responsibilities." Turkey accuses Syria of waging an "undeclared war" by backing Kurdish separatist guerrillas fighting for autonomy in the southeast over the past 14 years. The 22-member Arab group at the United Nations has expressed solidarity with Syria and rejected what it called Turkish threats to Damascus. The group called on NATO-member Turkey to exercise the utmost restraint. Washington fears any attack on Syria could further damage the Middle East peace process and has made clear it wants a peaceful solution. Azerbaijan backs Turkey. Turkey's state-run Anadolu meanwhile quoted the president of the Caspian Republic of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, as saying that his country supports Turkey in an ongoing conflict with Syria. "Turkey is our brother and we side with Turkey in the conflict with Syria," Aliyev told Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku. Aliyev's remarks came as he voted for his country's presidential elections in which he is running as a candidate. Turkey and the oil-rich former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan share close ethnic, linguistic and religious ties.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Sunday receives at the Raghadan Palace Roman Catholic patriarchs who are holding a conference in Amman

## Regent receives Roman Catholic patriarchs

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday called on the bishops of the Middle East to continue holding meetings and discussions that would "deepen our cultural identity." Speaking during a lunch he hosted at Raghadan Palace in honour of the Roman Catholic patriarchs who are holding a conference in Amman, Prince Hassan underlined the importance of the conference in focusing on the Middle East region's contributions to civilisation which are marked by moderation and characterised by a global humanitarian nature. Referring to the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year, Prince Hassan said the occasion should be used to promote human rights not only at the civil level but at the religious, political and social levels as well. Patriarch Mar Nasrallah Sfeir, head of the Maronite community in Antioch and the Orient, paid tribute to the Hashemite leadership's efforts in serving Jordan and the Arab Nation. He said the patriarchs joined him in prayers for the speedy recovery of His Majesty King Hussein, who is undergoing chemotherapy in the U.S. and his safe return to the homeland. Attending the lunch were Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Sour, the King's Adviser for Islamic Affairs Izzeddin Khatib Al Taniimi and other officials. Earlier the patriarchs opened their five-day meeting at Dabouq near Fuhis to discuss a range of topics including the issue of Jerusalem, the relations between Catholic churches and other churches in the region, relations between Muslims and Christians, and preparations for a bishops' meeting to be held in Beirut next May on the advent of the third millennium in addition to other issues of concern to churches in the region. Roman Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem, Jordan and Palestine Michael Sabbah, who is hosting the meeting, said in opening remarks that the church prays for the restoration of peace based on justice and security for the whole region. He said Jerusalem acquires a unique status as a city which God has designed to be a meeting place for the followers of the three monotheistic religions and reconciliation among people. The opening session was attended by representatives of diplomatic missions in Jordan, religious leaders and members of the Christian community in Jordan.

### Netanyahu blames Palestinian 'incitement' for soldier's killing

TOMER (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday attacked the funeral of a slain female soldier and blamed her killing on "incitement" by Palestinian media. Colonel Michal Adato, 19, was stabbed to death Friday by a Palestinian man as she got off a bus at the West Bank settlement of Tomer, where her family lives. Israeli soldiers shot and wounded the attacker, who is hospitalised and under arrest. Both Israeli and Palestinian security forces said the assailant, Imad Rashid Kamil, was mentally unstable and had acted alone. Kamil told investigators from his hospital bed that God had told him to kill an Israeli soldier. "It wasn't in a dream that [God] came to him," Netanyahu told mourners. "It was each morning when he turned on the Palestinian radio and television that broadcasts... words of hate and incitement for murderous acts." The prime minister repeated his call for Palestinians to stamp out anti-Israeli groups and incitement as a condition for the continuation of the peace talks. The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) insisted Sunday that Kamil has been suffering from mental illness for the past decade. "Nobody pushed him to do this act," the official Palestinian news agency quoted a statement from President Yasser Arafat's office as saying.

## Israeli, Palestinian leaders give bleak assessments ahead of peace summit

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli and Palestinian leaders began final preparations Sunday for this week's Mideast summit near Washington, with both sides playing down hopes for a long-awaited new peace accord. "Nothing is ready," said a senior Israeli official Sunday as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with his so-called inner security cabinet to finalise Israel's position ahead of the summit launch on Thursday. "Summits only succeed if they are properly prepared — 90 per cent of things should be agreed beforehand, and I just don't see that happening," the official told AFP on condition he not be named. Palestinian President Yasser Arafat offered a similarly bleak assessment of the situation ahead of a meeting with his cabinet Sunday to prepare for the summit. "Until now, nothing has been achieved," Arafat told reporters. "We have to wait until the meeting in Washington."

U.S. President Bill Clinton is to host the start of the multi-day negotiations at the Wye Plantation Conference Centre in rural Maryland. The U.S. leader called the summit after Israel agreed — following months of resistance — to grant Palestinians limited control over another 13 per cent of the West Bank before the two sides launch negotiations on a permanent peace settlement. But the senior Israeli official said serious differences remained on other core issues and time was running out to bridge the gaps. He said possible deal breakers included the extent of a second interim West Bank pull-back required under the Oslo accords and the cancellation of anti-Israel clauses in the PLO Charter. Israel has tentatively agreed to code only an additional one per cent of the West Bank following the 13 per cent pull-back, but the Palestinians are demanding a greater transfer. "This issue is not settled," the Israeli official said. Israel is ready, however, to drop its insistence that the Palestinians extradite activists wanted for attacks on Israelis in exchange for the pullbacks, he said. Israel knows of at least a dozen wanted activists who have been recruited into the Palestinian police forces and another 17 who are free, he said. "The Palestinian reading of the Oslo agreements is that jailing these terrorists meets the requirements," he said. "If they are really put in jail, we would be satisfied."

Concerning the PLO Charter, Israel is sticking to its demand that Arafat reconvene the Palestine National Council (PNC) within three months to repeat line-by-line the cancellation of anti-Israel clauses in the covenant, he said. Arafat says the PNC already cancelled the offensive clauses in May 1996 and he is unlikely to again convene the council's more than 600 members, who include strong critics of the peace process, at such a sensitive time. The Palestinians for their part demand that the disarming and arrest of Islamists be matched by similar action against violent Jewish settlers, something Netanyahu has refused to include in the negotiations. "It's a ridiculous demand," the official said. "Israel is a nation with the rule of law. If an Israeli murders a Palestinian, he is jailed. But if he kills in self-defence, that's another matter."

The Palestinians also want a halt to building in Jewish settlements, saying the construction is solidifying Israel's hold on occupied territories to pre-empt negotiations on final borders. Even in the run-up to the Wye talks, Netanyahu has done the opposite, moving ahead last week with construction of Jewish housing deep inside the West Bank. More worrisome for the Palestinians, Netanyahu on Friday appointed the hawkish Ariel Sharon — whose disdain for the Palestinian cause and support for Jewish settlement is legendary — as foreign minister and chief negotiator for a final peace deal.

### Arafat arrives today

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will visit Jordan briefly Monday to discuss the Middle East peace process, Palestinian officials said Sunday. Arafat will then leave for the United States where he will participate in a summit Oct. 15 with U.S. President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

## Aziz mission to U.N. gives rise to optimism in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz's mission to the United Nations has raised hopes of cooperation being restored between Baghdad and U.N. weapons inspectors, Iraqi officials and diplomats said here Sunday. The optimism came as Aziz returned to Baghdad after holding four meetings in New York with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan. "The recent diplomatic initiative of Mr. Aziz has allowed for progress to be made... and the results are bound to show soon," an Iraqi official told AFP, asking not to be named. "The tour was positive and it will contribute to resolving the situation."

A Western diplomat, meanwhile, said Aziz was to brief Iraq's leadership and he expected Baghdad to announce "a settlement on the issue of cooperation with UNSCOM," the U.N. Special Commission in charge of Iraqi disarmament. The Iraqi official was also confident that a solution was in the offing. Baghdad halted arms inspections by UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency on Aug. 5, charging that the Special Commission was refusing to recognise Iraq's progress in disarmament over the past seven years. Annan has proposed a comprehensive review of the sanctions regime and a "reasonable" timeframe for the lifting of the embargo in force since Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The U.N. Security Council has said Iraq must first resume its cooperation with weapons inspectors. "We are not against cooperation with UNSCOM and we don't refuse to respect our commitments, but we want firm guarantees that our sacrifices... will be recognised," said the Iraqi official. Aziz sought assurances from Annan that a comprehensive review would accelerate the end of sanctions, which cannot be lifted until UNSCOM declares that it has eliminated Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

## Plans to establish Maronite parish in Amman stir controversy

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — Plans for the establishment of a Maronite parish in Amman came under fire by three headline Muslim Brotherhood leaders, who challenged the government by protesting that "there are no Maronites in Jordan." Former Deputies Ibrahim Zeid Keilani, Mohammad Abu Faris, and Hamam Sa'id have urged Amman mayor of and all Greater Amman Municipality council members "to stop this conspiracy and not to surrender the land with the custody of which you were entrusted." The letter, signed by the three leaders and dated Oct. 10, called on the mayor and the council to heed their demand, which they said was echoed in all mosques, by all Muslim believers and scholars. But, beyond the argument over the allegedly insignificant size of the Maronite community in Jordan, many Islamists and some among the general public believe the Maronites in Jordan should be denied a church because of the collusion between Christian militias and Israeli occupation forces in 1982 against Lebanese Muslims and Palestinians. The moderate secretary general of the Islamic Action Front, Abdul Latif Arabiyat, declined to comment on both the news that Jordan's estimated 150 Maronite families will soon have

a church in the capital, and the protest by Sa'id, Keilani, and Abu Faris. "We have to consider many aspects," he told the Jordan Times, without elaborating. The Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and the East, Nasrallah Sfeir, currently in Amman for a conference of Catholic churches in the Middle East, stressed that "there are Maronites in Jordan, and they have been here for a long time." "They have a pastor and a bishop, but they still do not have a parish," Sfeir told the Jordan Times in an interview yesterday. "They are making a special effort to have their church here, and now that His Majesty has donated a plot of land

to them, they hope they will be able to build a church." Officials said the move reflected Jordan's tradition of openness and peaceful co-existence among peoples of different faiths and ethnic groups, in line with the country's long-established policy of fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among all. However, the project is still at a very early stage, and Father George Shihan, a Maronite priest in Amman, stressed that the location of the new church has not yet been decided, although some sources said it will be built on a plot of land on the Airport Highway, south of Amman. "We still do not know [where the

church will be built]," Shihan told the Jordan Times. "It is not the first time that His Majesty shows interest in the Maronite community here. Since the time of the late King Abdullah, ties between the Hashemite family and the Maronites have been close," said the father. Placing the size of his community at 1,500, Shihan stressed that "there are Maronite families originally from Jordan." The community would be equally divided between Jordanians and Lebanese nationals. "But most families have been in Jordan for the past 50 years; they came here from Palestine in 1948," he said.

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## Pro-Khatami forces on defensive ahead of key Iranian elections

TEHRAN (R) — Influential supporters of Iran's moderate President Mohammad Khatami criticised conservative rivals on Sunday for hamstringing their prospects in key elections later this month.

A grouping of leftist clerics and Iran's most powerful student movement denounced the right for weeding out leftist candidates ahead of Oct. 23 polls for the Assembly of Experts which appoints and can dismiss the country's supreme leader.

Figures in the leftist press show the final field of candidates comprises 130 conservatives, 20 moderates and 10 leftists. There are 86 seats in the Assembly of Experts, all chosen by popular vote.

The two leftist factions, which have close ties, also warned that a low voter turnout caused by a lack of popular candidates could ultimately undermine the legitimacy of Iran's Islamic system of government.

But each stopped short of implementing earlier calls for an outright boycott.

Under the Iranian system, the supreme leader stands above party politics and wields final authority over foreign

policy, the military and the judiciary.

"The League of Militant Clerics sees itself disarmed and its hands tied, and if God forbid the desired result is not obtained, it does not consider itself guilty," the League said in a statement.

The leftist students group said the vetting of candidates by the conservative-led Guardian Council had virtually assured victory of the right.

"How is it possible that in a competition, the player and the referee can be one and the same and maintain his neutrality?" said the student group, which boasts about 50,000 active members nationwide.

Among prominent leftists disqualified from the polls was Mohammad Mousavi Khomeini, a veteran of the assembly and the leader of students who stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran in 1979. He is also publisher of the pro-Khatami newspaper Salam.

Others left off the final list included Abdullah Nouri, forced in June to resign as interior minister by conservative MPs, and Hadi Khamenei, a younger brother of the supreme leader.

None of nine women among

the nearly 400 people who signed up to run was approved by the Guardian Council.

The league said the elimination of its leading figures had forced it to abandon plans to field a full slate of candidates, but nonetheless asked Iranians to "vote for anyone who deserves the sensitive and vital duty as an expert."

The assembly election earlier received a boost when the leading moderate party, the pro-Khatami Executives of Construction, said it would present a slate of its own despite misgivings over the selection of candidates.

"Unfortunately, we see that in some districts, where there are many religious personalities, there are as many approved candidates as seats," the official news agency IRNA quoted party secretary-general Gholam Hussein Karbaschi as saying.

Karbaschi, suspended mayor of Tehran and a close Khatami ally, has appealed a five-year jail sentence on graft charges in a case which moderates condemned as politically motivated. The conservative-run judiciary denies the accusation.

Despite the reluctant partici-

pation of the moderate and leftist factions grouped around Khatami, analysts and politicians have warned that a low turnout by a disillusioned electorate could badly weaken the Islamic Republic.

All Islamic factions — leftists, moderates and conservatives — would suffer as a result, they said.

Election officials say about 39 million Iranians are eligible to take part in the poll after a two-week campaign.

Clearly recognising the danger ahead, Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last week called on all factions to promote a heavy turnout.

"Today, everyone should try to hold lively elections so that the enemy would be disappointed as in the past," Iranian television quoted him as saying.

Khamenei, who succeeded revolutionary Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini after his death in 1989, accused Western media of spearheading an attack to demoralise voters.

"Which people are elected is of secondary importance," Khamenei said, adding that factional disputes in the Islamic Republic were "differences among brothers."



PROTEST AGAINST SHARON: A member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) Sunday hurls a poster with photographs of Ariel Sharon, the newly appointed Israeli foreign minister, during a rally in Nablus. The appointment of the controversial former defence minister to the post of foreign minister drew mixed reactions on the Palestinian street. Writing on the poster says: "Burn Sharon and Madeleine Albright" (AP photo)

## Appeal for Algerian rebels to join ceasefire

ALGIERS (AFP) — Influential Muslim intellectuals and leaders issued an appeal Sunday calling on armed groups in Algeria to join a ceasefire, being observed by one of the country's main Islamist groups.

The appeal, signed by some 30 leading figures in the Muslim World, said armed groups should take part in a ceasefire held since Oct. 1, 1997, by the Armed Islamic Army (AIS), the political wing of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

"We call on all armed groups to join the AIS in this ceasefire and overall reconciliation to finally put an end to the spilling of blood and to thwart the enemies of Islam in their attempts to reform our religion," said the text, a copy of which was obtained by AFP.

Figures who signed the appeal include Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of the Palestinian activist group Hamas, and Sheikh Rashed Ghamouchi, head of the Tunisian movement Nahda.

The text hailed the ceasefire as a "good work and a brave patriotic stance which has noticeably contributed to a drop in the level of killings."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### New Rushdie bounty 'backlash'

LONDON (AP) — Supporters of Salman Rushdie said Sunday that a new bounty offered by a hardline Iranian student group to kill the British author was an expected backlash against Iranian authorities distancing themselves from an initial bounty. "This is a very small hardline group of people who are in a minority," said Carmel Bedford, spokeswoman for the London-based International Committee for the Defence of Salman Rushdie. "We expected this sort of backlash and fight back," she added. "We are in the run-up to elections in Iran and things are getting more moderate there. The hardliners are losing ground and this is the sort of stunt they pull to regain it."

### Sudanese opposition slams parties law

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese opposition parties have criticised draft legislation on the formation of political parties in Sudan, charging that it favours the Khartoum regime, press reports said Sunday. The Al Rai Al Akher daily reported that critics have said the bill was "tailored to the interest of the National Congress," which will become a political party once the bill becomes law. Ali Ahmad Al Sayyid of the outlawed Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) was quoted as saying that the debate on the bill would be "ostentatious," adding that no parties or other political forces had been invited to help draft it.

### Parts of Haifa evacuated in huge blaze

HAIFA (AFP) — A major forest fire seriously damaged some 20 homes early Sunday and forced the evacuation of outlying neighbourhoods of Haifa, Israel's third biggest city, officials said. Several thousand people were forced from their homes and three people were hospitalised for smoke inhalation as firefighters battled to contain the blaze on a mountainside on the southern edge of the city, said Mayor Amram Mitzna. A huge cloud of smoke hung over this Mediterranean port from the fire, which destroyed around 500 hectares of forest and was still raging several hours after it broke out.

### Amputation for theft in Mecca

DUBAI (R) — An Egyptian man convicted of theft had his right hand chopped off in the Saudi Holy City of Mecca on Sunday. An interior ministry statement read on Saudi television said the man had been found guilty of stealing and pick-pocketing in Mecca's Grand Mosque, which houses Islam's holiest shrine.

## Christian group prays for no concessions to Palestinians

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu personally thanked a group of Christian Zionists who came to his office Sunday to pray he would steadfastly refuse to make peace with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu is to travel to Washington later this week for a summit with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat under the auspices of U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Dozens of representatives of the International Christian Zionist Centre went to Netanyahu's office to show support for the hard line he has taken thus far. They sang, danced, prayed, waved flags and shook tambourines.

"I think he was really grateful for the love we expressed," said Marie Ottens, a spokeswoman for the group.

Christian Zionists believe the return of Jews to Israel ful-

fills Biblical prophecy and points to an imminent return of the Messiah. The group opposes Israel's withdrawal from territory in exchange for peace with the Palestinians.

The group also offered prayers at Har Homa, site of a controversial Jewish neighbourhood in traditionally Arab east Jerusalem. Ground-breaking at the site sparked a breakdown of peace talks in March 1997.

Members of the group, which wants to build its headquarters at Har Homa, gathered there to express support for the project.

The group's founder and director, Jan Willem van der Hoeven, also led them in prayer for an end to the peace process.

Van der Hoeven cited biblical prophecies of "false peace" and said Arafat cannot be trusted in negotiations.

## Iran denies sentence against German upheld Germany criticised for 'politicisation' of Hofer case

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran denied Sunday that an appeals court upheld a death sentence a day earlier for a German businessman convicted of having sex with a Muslim woman.

No new ruling has been issued for the 56-year-old Helmut Hofer, foreign ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi was quoted as saying by the official Islamic Republic News Agency.

Hofer's lawyer and several newspapers reported Saturday that the death sentence against Hofer was upheld by the appeals court. The lawyer showed a copy of the verdict to the Associated Press.

The denial seems to be an attempt by the Iranian government to mollify Germany, which reacted angrily to news

of the verdict.

It could reflect, too, infighting within the fractured Iranian government, where hard-line factions and moderates centred around President Mohammad Khatami are vying for influence.

Hardliners, in particular, control the powerful judiciary. The Iranian ambassador in Bonn was summoned to the foreign ministry to hear a protest over the verdict.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said the court ruling "inevitably throws a new shadow on both sides' wish to improve relations."

On Sunday, Iran criticised Germany for turning Hofer's case into a political issue that could threaten relations.

"As far as Iran is concerned, Hofer's case is trivial and is a

judicial issue where political considerations do not play a role," a commentary on state-run Tehran Radio said Sunday.

There were conflicting accounts of the appeal Sunday. Mohammadi said that Hofer's case has already been presented to the supreme court.

Another court routinely examined the case for possible errors before forwarding it, he said.

But the head of the court where the trial took place said that the death sentence had been upheld.

The death sentence verdict "has not been changed," Nasser Seraj was quoted as saying by the Jomhuri Islami newspaper.

Hofer's lawyer, Malek Heuschang Qahhari, was out of

town Sunday and not available for comment. But on Saturday, he said that he had expected his client to be released.

"I'm surprised. I expected that today's verdict would clear Hofer of all charges," Qahhari said.

Hofer was sentenced to death in January soon after his arrest for having sex with 26-year-old Vahideh Qassemi, a medical student.

Iranian law punishes sex between unmarried Muslims with flogging. If the man is a non-Muslim, he faces the death penalty.

The appeals court had earlier assured German officials that Hofer would be freed because the court was satisfied that he was a Muslim and would marry the Iranian woman.

## Algerian Premier Ouyahia may quit on Oct. 28 — paper

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's Prime Minister Ahmad Ouyahia, who has ambitions to run for the presidency, might announce his resignation within the next 16 days, a daily newspaper said on Sunday.

"So as to have elbow room, the prime minister might tender his resignation to the president in the next few days, most likely on Oct. 28,"

said the French-language La Tribune daily quoting Ouyahia's National Democratic Rally (RND) governing party.

Ouyahia's ambitions to run for presidency was one of the reasons why he might resign, the paper said.

"If his resignation was accepted, [Ouyahia] will not hesitate for a moment to muster 75,000 signatures

needed for the candidacy," La Tribune said.

There was no immediate confirmation from Ouyahia's office or the headquarters of his RND party.

The government, in response to rumours about Ouyahia's resignation, said vaguely last week that the cabinet would have to go "if the nation's highest interests required

such a move."

El Watan, the most informed outlet on Algeria's usually closed-door policy-making, said the 45-year-old Ouyahia had ranked third in a recent survey conducted on the prospects of eight would-be contenders for the presidency.

Ouyahia had trailed behind former Prime Minister Mouloud Ham-

rouche and former Foreign Minister Abdul Aziz Bouteflika.

The survey was commissioned by President Liamine Zeroul's office and conducted by the government-run Strategic and Global Studies Institute, the paper said. It did not mention which criteria the institute had used for the survey.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 .....Cartoon — Batman  
15:30 Drama — The Genie From Down Under  
16:00 .....Drama — Neighbours  
16:30 .....Doc. — Last Frontiers  
17:00 .....French Programme — Thalassa  
18:00 .....Drama — Wind at My Back (Ep.7)  
19:00 .....Le Journal  
19:15 French Programme — Science Actualities  
19:30 .....News headlines  
19:35 .....Comedy — The Parenthood  
20:00 .....Doc. — The Internet Cafe  
20:30 .....Big Sky (Ep. 10)  
21:10 .....Encounter  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:30 Mini-series — A Respectable Trade (Ep.2)  
23:59 .....End of T.N.

### PRAYER TIMES

04:15 .....Fajr  
05:32 .....(Sunrise) Duha  
11:22 .....Dhuhr  
14:39 .....Asr  
17:12 .....Maghreb  
18:29 .....Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
4632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590  
Terra Sancta Church Tel.

4622366  
Anglican Church Tel.  
4624853/4624811.  
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox  
Church Tel. 4771751.  
Amman International Church  
Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical  
Congregation Tel. 5638404  
The Evangelical Local Church  
in Amman Tel. 5811295

St. John the Baptist at De la  
Salle College Tel. 5661757  
Church of the Annunciation Tel.  
4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel.  
4646138  
Church of Presentation, Sweifeh  
Tel. 5920146

The Uniate Catholic Church  
Tel. 4624757  
The English-Language Catholic  
Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel.  
4892679  
The Baptist Church Tel.  
4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church  
4771331  
The Armenian Orthodox  
Church Tel. 4775261

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Moderate to fine weather conditions will prevail with winds southwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, it will be relatively hot, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.  
Amman.....15/30  
Aqaba.....22/37  
Deserts.....13/31  
Jordan Valley.....23/37

Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 30 Aqaba 37 Humidity readings: Amman 14 per cent. Aqaba 20 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun.....26  
Jerash.....33  
Um Qays.....31  
Madaba.....31  
Petra.....31  
Dead Sea.....32

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:  
Dr. Abdul Majid Al Sha'ir .....4391405  
Dr. Hani Al Ahmad .....4394336

Dr. Adnan Zaghlool .....4898140  
Dr. Fakher Bilal .....522233  
Firas pharmacy .....5661912  
Al Asena pharmacy .....5347632  
Naboukha pharmacy .....4623672  
Al Salam pharmacy .....4636730  
Yacoub pharmacy .....4644945  
Shmeisani pharmacy .....4637660  
Najib pharmacy .....5347632

IRBID:  
Dr. Issam Al Salih .....246858  
Al Quds pharmacy .....(—)  
ZARQA:  
Dr. Zuhair Al Qadi .....906066  
Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

assistance) .....121  
Overseas Calls .....010230  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs .....4623101  
Abdali Tel. Repairs .....5661101  
Jordan Televisi .....4773111  
Radio Jordan .....4774111  
Water Authority .....5680100  
J. Electricity Authority .....5815615  
Electric Power Co. ....4636381  
RJ Flight Information .....44-53200  
Queen Alia Int. Airport .....44-53200

AMMAN:  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery .....5921199  
The Islamic, Abdli .....5666131/7  
Husseini Medical Centre .....5856856  
Luzmila .....4630195  
Khalidi Maternity .....464281/6  
Akileh Maternity .....4642441/2  
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Al-Muasher Hospital .....5667227/9  
Al-Ahli, Abdali .....5664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen .....477101/3  
Al-Bashir .....4775111/26  
Army, Marka .....4891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital .....5602240/50  
Amal Hospital .....4891611/15

Food Control Centre .....4637111  
Civil Defence Department .....5661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....4630341  
Civil Defence Emergency .....199  
Rescue Police 192.4621111.4637777  
Fire Brigade .....4617101  
Blood Bank .....4775121  
Highway Police .....5343402  
Traffic Police .....4896390  
Public Security Dept. ....4630321  
Hotel Complaints .....5605800  
Price Complaints .....5661176  
Water & Sewage Complaints .....4897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints .....4787111

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### HOSPITALS

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Appeal for Algerian rebels to join ceasefire

ALGERIA (AP) — Islamic leaders issued an appeal Monday calling on armed groups in Algeria to join a ceasefire being observed by one of the country's main Islamic groups.

The appeal, signed by 30 leading figures in the Islamic World, said armed groups should take part in a ceasefire held since Oct. 1, 1997, by the Armed Islamic Army, the political wing of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

"We call on all armed groups to join the FIS ceasefire and overall movement to finally put an end to the killing of innocent people and the attempts to restore the religious," said the text, which was obtained by AFP.

Figures who signed the appeal include Sheikh Abdelhak Yousfi, the spiritual leader of the Palestinian Islamic Movement, and Sheikh Abdelhak Ghannouchi, head of a Tunisian movement.

The text hailed the ceasefire as "a good work and a positive stance which is noticeably contributed to the level of killing."

On Sunday, Jordanian officials said they had received information that the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (IFLP) had agreed to a ceasefire.

The IFLP, which is active in the West Bank and Gaza, has been fighting against Israeli forces since 1988.

The IFLP's ceasefire would be a significant step towards ending the violence in the region, officials said.

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HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, speaks with green grocers at a vegetable stall at the Wihdat market during his tour of Amman yesterday (Photo by Yousef Allam)

## Regent tours Amman districts, inspects public works projects

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Sunday toured several districts of Amman and inspected projects by the Greater Amman Municipality and the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC).

Accompanied by Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Cabinet ministers, Amman Mayor Nidal Hadid, HUDC Director Yousef Hiyasat and other officials, the Crown Prince inspected Al Hussein Refugee Camp's open market.

"We are all Jordanians, joined together through common interests," the Crown Prince told camp residents.

Prince Hassan again called for a general census to determine people's needs and the required projects that would improve their lives.

The Regent visited the site of a tunnel project that will link downtown Amman to its northern neighbourhoods through a new road called Al Urdun.

The Crown Prince was briefed by Hadid on the different stages of the estimated JD650,000 project. The mayor said the municipality paid JD10 million to appropriate the land necessary for the project.

The Regent met workers at the site and expressed appreciation of and pride in their and the municipality's efforts in executing projects in the capital.

Prince Hassan also visited a home in Al Hussein Refugee Camp and a medical clinic, where he spoke with residents and enquired about their needs.

He said construction in Amman's various districts should be a joint effort involving the various sectors of society. He urged the concerned authorities to create public committees that would shoulder collective responsibilities for development.

Prince Hassan also visited the Amman Citadel and a local store and later visited downtown shopping centres, where he spoke with a number of people about the general business situation.

The Crown Prince later inspected the new sports city being built on a 110-dunum plot of land in Qweisimeh in eastern Amman and was briefed by the mayor on the progress of work on the JD7.78 million facility.

Prince Hassan's tour took him to the Wihdat market, where he also talked to traders and shopkeepers, stressing the need to expand and improve the quality of the municipality's services to cover all regions.

The Regent's tour also included districts in which the HUDC is carrying out housing projects. In a statement to Jordan Television, the Crown Prince praised the municipality's infrastructure achievements and stressed the need for defining spending priorities.

The Regent visited the new Amman Municipality offices in the Ras Al 'Ain district and met with municipal council members.

## Ma'an leaders urge government to crack down on smugglers

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Tribal leaders in the southern governorate of Ma'an issued a statement Saturday supporting government efforts to crack down on smugglers and armed men.

"We extend all support to our security agencies in their efforts to deter those who are trying to harm the stability and security of the country," said the statement, signed by more than 50 notables from Ma'an region.

"We call on the government to be tough on those who smuggle or trade in illicit drugs and to show no leniency towards them," the statement said.

The one-page statement followed a shooting incident that involved police and an alleged drug smuggler on Wednesday, in which three policemen were injured, a Ma'an deputy said Sunday.

Lower House Deputy Ahmad Khatab said police were chasing Omar Abu Haleb for alleged weapons and drug smuggling when he opened fire on the officers.

"Abu Haleb escaped into the desert. I have no information whether he was arrested or not," Khatab told the Jordan Times.

"We call on the government to strike with an iron fist against smugglers and to put an end to their activities, not only in our city but in the Kingdom at large," the lawmaker said.

Interior Minister Nayef Qadi was not immediately available and the police director in Ma'an, Colonel Ali Abu Awad, declined to comment.

An eyewitness told the Jordan Times that Abu Haleb was holding a Turkish national hostage and police began pursuit. He said the suspect slipped into a street wedding procession and escaped.

Turkish embassy sources told the Jordan Times that they were not aware of any involvement by a Turkish citizen in the incident.

Khatab refuted allegations that the southern governorate, which covers a vast region, is being used as a transit route by drug traffickers. He also said the number of weapons in the city was not "large."

"We live in a vast governorate and we travel to Amman all the time. It is only natural that most of us possess weapon for self-defence. Carrying weapon is part of our life," the deputy said.

Last February, the government sent the army to restore law and order in the city following two days of unrest after one civilian was killed and more than 20 policemen were injured during pro-Iraq demonstrations.

The army launched a house-to-house search for weapons. Police sources said that more than 400 weapons were confiscated during the week-long search.

On Saturday, the government announced proposed legislation that would impose the death penalty on persons found guilty of trading in illegal automatic weapons.

## Farmers commend government's debt rescheduling decision

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanian farmers Sunday hailed a government decision to reschedule debt owed to the Agricultural Credit Corporation as a step that will allow them to maintain production levels while paying back their loans.

The Cabinet on Saturday announced that 41,000 small farmers who owe a total of nearly JD17 million to the ACC would benefit from the decision, which stipulates that loans may be repaid over a period of seven to eight years.

Abdul Karim Awad, a farmer from North Shouneh, appealed to the government to exempt the debtors from paying interest on their loans and to back the work of the farmers' association to help it provide farm equipment and other inputs at lower prices. He also called on the government to reduce the price of water for farmers in the Jordan Valley.

But according to Agriculture Minister Mijhem Khreissha, the government's decision will only provide for rescheduling, not cancellation of interest. Khreissha added that the government hopes to give the farmers breathing space to help them increase production.

The minister said the government's decision is an indication of its seriousness in finding solutions to the farmers' problems and its concern over developing the agricultural sector.

Judeh said the Central Bank of Jordan loaned the ACC JD10 million to provide it with sufficient liquidity to continue granting loans to farmers.

Yassin Nueimat, a Jordan Valley farmer, said farmers are happy with the decision, but he expressed hope that the government would help open new foreign markets for their products.

Thaier Ghazzawi, another farmer, said that the farmers' debts were a major concern to them and that the rescheduling decision has brought them "relief."

But he added that the government should help farmers acquire inputs at lower prices and help them find new markets.

Also Sunday, the Planning Department at the Ministry of Agriculture published statistics on Jordan's national agricultural production in 1997, which amounted to JD254.2 million at current prices and contributed to the gross domestic product by 5.5 per cent.

The statistics showed that nearly 50 per cent of Jordan's population make their living in the agricultural sector but that only 28,000 Jordanians actually do agricultural work. Approximately 100,000 foreign workers are employed in the sector, it added.

According to the statistics, the total agricultural area amounts to 3.8 million dunums, of which 1.3 million are planted with fruit trees while the rest is used to grow vegetables and field crops.

The statistics showed that Jordan now has 2.6 million heads of sheep, 63,000 heads of cattle and 2,205 poultry farms.

Haddadin did not appear in court. According to the Constitution, ministers can be tried by a higher council for any alleged crimes committed while in office, but only after an indictment by a two-thirds majority of the Lower House of Parliament.

The society accused Haddadin and the other defendants of negligence and supplying drinking water that did not meet Jordan's standards for human consumption.

Lawyers for the defendants submitted their rebuttals to the prosecutor's charges, arguing that their clients were not responsible for the contamination.

A lawyer defending Mohammad Abu Taha, the plant's director, requested a postponement of the court session to have sufficient time to prepare his client's defence.

The court session yesterday was presided over by Judge Ali Abu Hjeleh.

## what's going on

**FILM**

- "Coup de Foudre" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabel Weibdeh, at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.
- "Sense and Sensibility" at the British Council, Jabel Amman on Tuesday Oct. 13 at 6:00 p.m.

**THE PALESTINIAN HERITAGE WEEK**

- Seminar entitled "The Zinjir Lie About the Islamic Heritage in Jerusalem" (in Arabic) with the participation of Mr. Ra'if Najm, Dr. Ali Abu Ghannimah, Dr. Ali Al 'Umm and Sheikh Ra'id Sabab (who will participate by phone) at the Professional Associations Complex on Tuesday Oct. 13 (6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.).

**LECTURES**

- "Horizons of Exile: From the Current Arab Emigration" (in Arabic) by Khalid Mufayy Al-Din, secretary general of the National Progressive Unionist Grouping in Egypt at Abdul Hammed Shounan Foundation, Jabel Amman at 6:30 p.m.
- "The Jewel in the Crown — The Indian Subcontinent" by Dr. Noha Hammad and Mrs. Anna Obaidat at the British Council, Jabel Amman at 5:00 p.m.
- "The Winter Journey" by Franz Schubert and Wilhelm Muller by German music expert Helmut Burkart (in cooperation with Goethe-Institut and the German Music Council) at the National Music Conservatory (Tel. 5687630), at 6:00 p.m.

**EXHIBITIONS**

- Exhibition on "Protection of Archaeological Heritage," a book exhibition, and children's art exhibition at the City Hall, Ras Al 'Ain, until Oct. 14.
- "International Motor Show 99" at the Amman International Motor Show, Airport Road (Tel. 5714211), until Oct. 17.
- "Calligraphy on Crafts" at the Jordan Craft Centre (Al Aydi), Jabel Amman (Tel. 464555), October 18-31.
- Works by Laila Jamal at the French Cultural Centre, Jabel Weibdeh, until Oct. 26.
- Art of Arab calligraphy by Nassir Mansour at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Tel. 4630128), until Oct. 23.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Prince Faisal opens motor show**

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Faisal on Sunday opened the Tenth Amman International Motor Show with the participation of a number of international car manufacturers. Prince Faisal was briefed on specifications of 1999 model cars. The show, which is being held at the Amman International Show on Airport Highway, will last for one week.

**Prince Ra'd attends reception**

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Beo Zeid, the chief chamberlain, and Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya attended a reception by Taiwanese Commercial Attaché Francis Chang. Chang said the president and vice president of Taiwan sent a cable to His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, voicing hope for King Hussein's quick recovery.

**AMC releases September figures**

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Marketing Corporation yesterday said Jordan exported 33,180 tonnes of fruits and vegetables worth JD8.9 million in September. The vegetables, constituting 90.1 per cent of the exports, were worth JD7.6 million, while fruits registered only 9.9 per cent with a value of JD1.3 million. The AMC said the United Arab Emirates topped the list of importers of Jordanian agricultural products. "The UAE imported 36 per cent of the total amount of Jordanian agricultural produce, or 11,934 tonnes, followed by Kuwait with 23.1 per cent, or 7,692 tonnes, and Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Sudan," the AMC said.

**Senator receives Russian envoy**

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Senate Speaker Thouqan Hindawi on Sunday received Russian Ambassador to Jordan Alexander Sultanov at the end of his tour of duty. Hindawi thanked Sultanov for his efforts to bolster relations between Jordan and Russia. For his part, the outgoing Russian ambassador voiced appreciation for His Majesty King Hussein's efforts towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

**RJ official meets with envoy**

AMMAN (Petra) — The chairman of Royal Jordanian, Walid Asfour, met with French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Emié and discussed cooperation between RJ and French airlines.

**Three killed in accident**

AMMAN (Petra) — Three people were killed Sunday in a road accident on the Amman-Tafleh highway. The three family members were en route to their residence in the Rashadiyeh area when the driver hit a concrete mixer truck which was in the wrong lane.

## Jordanian-Yemeni committee to meet later this month

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Jordanian-Yemeni Joint Committee is due to meet in Amman on Oct. 24 to discuss cooperation in trade, industry and other fields and to conclude several accords, a government source said Sunday.

The two sides are expected to sign agreements to enable each country to sell the other up to \$10 million worth of goods free from customs duties, avoid dual taxation and cooperate in judicial affairs, according to a source at the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

The Oct. 24 meeting will be preceded by a three-day preparatory committee meeting to discuss the details of an agreement on expanding trade, an earlier decision to create a free trade zone between Yemen and Jordan and investment opportunities, and to work out a mechanism for the implementation of a bilateral protocol on cooperation in technical fields, the source added.

The committee will also discuss the prospect of offering Jordanian expertise in electrical and industrial fields, industrial cooperation, promoting the work of the Jordanian trade centre in Yemen, joint investments and holding Jordanian trade fairs in Yemen.

The joint committee will sign quota agreements on agricultural trade and provision of Jordanian expertise in housing and contracting.

Other topics on the agenda include revising Yemeni port fees to facilitate trade, updating a health agreement and implementing agreements on labour exchanges and sports and youth cooperation for 1999 as well as a cultural accord.

## Church unity, 'inner peace' challenges for Christians next millennium — patriarch

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The unity of all churches and the search for real peace, "peace that comes from within," will be among the challenges facing Christians in the Middle East and worldwide in the next millennium, according to the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, Nasrallah Sfeir.

"There can be no peace in society if there is no peace inside us," says the 78-year-old Lebanese patriarch.

In a world more and more indifferent to humanitarian considerations, in a region plagued by 50 years of uninterrupted conflicts, and from a country devastated by a 15-year civil war, Sfeir speaks of spirituality as the key to real social, political, and economic justice.

Like peace, political involvement should also "come from within" and be rooted in the universal values of justice and truth.

Sfeir reiterates the content of the Apostolic Exhortation issued by Pope John Paul II during his historic visit to Beirut in May 1997: a strong appeal for the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon, an apparent reference to Israeli occupation forces in south Lebanon and a significant Syrian military presence.

Lebanese Christians have both the right and duty to engage in political life, "but the situation now does not allow them to do so," comments the patriarch.

On the internal Lebanese situation and the role of Christians in the country's policy-making, his answer is brief: "At the present, the power is on one side, and Christians are on the other."

In Amman since Friday to participate in the eighth annual conference of the heads of the Catholic churches in the Middle East, which opened yesterday in Fuhais, west of Amman, Sfeir speaks hopefully of the future of Christian minorities in the region.

"Arab Christians have the very important role to witness the evangelical values and the revelations of the gospels in non-Christian countries."

This year's gathering of the heads of the seven Oriental Catholic churches will focus on pastoral and ecumenical issues in order to achieve more coordination among the communities.

The Fuhais conference, which ends on Oct. 16, will also prepare for a bishops' meeting of all Oriental churches in Beirut next May on the advent of the third Christian millennium, Sfeir says.

Praising the inter-faith dialogue initiated by Jordan's leadership, Sfeir adds that mutual understanding and tolerance between Muslims and Christians can only enrich both.

"The secret is to understand that Muslims are not asked to convert to Christianity, or vice versa, but only to accept each others' differences."

Commenting on fears voiced by Christian scholars and clergymen that the size of Christian communities in the Middle East is shrinking, Sfeir says he is optimistic that will not happen.

"There were two million Maronites in Lebanon before 1975 [the beginning of the civil war]."

"The Lebanese population was equally divided between Muslims and Christians, and this is not the case anymore," he says, adding that most of the 700,000 Lebanese who fled the country to escape the conflict were Christians.

"But I hope that now, with peace, many will return."



Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir



## Holbrooke resumes Kosovo crisis talks

BELGRADE (R) — U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke resumed talks with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic Sunday, and a U.S. source said Washington's troubleshooter was prepared to continue negotiations so long as there was hope for an agreement.

Holbrooke met Milosevic in an effort to persuade Yugoslavia to back down in its confrontation with NATO over Kosovo after failing to achieve any breakthrough in negotiations Friday and Saturday.

A NATO session to authorize air strikes to back its demands is due Monday afternoon and the source said Holbrooke's talks with Milosevic would "go on as long as they seem useful".

Holbrooke emerged from seven hours of discussions with the Yugoslav leader Saturday and said: "Nothing is changed. The situation is very serious."

The United Nations and major powers want an irreversible commitment from Milosevic to end fighting with the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo and to start talks on autonomy for the southern Serbian province.

Yugoslavia put a more optimistic gloss on the outcome of the last round of negotiations with Holbrooke, saying everything was in place for a political settlement.

"It was agreed that all necessary conditions exist for the resolution of open questions through a political process," said a statement released by the official Tanjug news agency.

The demands contained in the U.N. Security Council Resolution have been realised in practice, which is evidenced by the

accelerated normalisation of the situation in the field," the three-sentence statement said.

It referred to a U.N. resolution demanding Serbia withdraw police units from its southernmost province, where ethnic Albanians are a nine-to-one majority and the rebel ethnic Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army is fighting for independence.

The resolution also called for an immediate halt to fighting and an end to repressive actions against civilians, hundreds of whom have been killed and tens of thousands forced from their homes.

Holbrooke, who arrived in Serbia Friday, held two days of talks with Milosevic and, separately, with ethnic

Albanian leaders in a last-ditch attempt to defuse the crisis and avert the growing threat of NATO air strikes.

Many Serbs are convinced air strikes against the country are inevitable and fear attacks on Belgrade and other towns despite NATO's declared intention to concentrate on military targets.

Fears have been heightened in Belgrade by the departure to safety abroad of most Western embassy staff and their families.

Although the Yugoslav government has vowed to defend itself, the Belgrade newsletter VIP, quoting independent military experts, said NATO power could smash Yugoslavia's air force and air defences in a day.

## Russia wants to avert Yugo strikes, even at 11th-hour

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said Sunday that Moscow was still seeking a peaceful solution to the Kosovo crisis, despite the looming threat of NATO air strikes, ITAR-TASS reported.

Ivanov said Moscow "will try" to ensure a peaceful resolution to the standoff between the Atlantic alliance and the Yugoslav authorities over Belgrade's crackdown on ethnic-Albanian separatists.

His comments in the Uzbek capital Tashkent, where President Boris Yeltsin arrived for a short official visit, came amid reports that Russia's ambassador to NATO had returned home for "consultations" on the Kosovo crisis.

Russia has urged Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to respect U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for an end to military operations in the ethnic Albanian-majority province and open talks with Albanian leaders on the region's political status.

More than 1,000 ethnic Albanians have been killed in the conflict since February, sparking a refugee crisis and fears of a wider Balkan conflict.

Russia, a traditional Belgrade ally, insists the crisis is an internal matter and has vowed to block NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia in the event of a Security Council vote. Britain and the United States say no extra U.N. approval is needed to authorise strikes.

## NATO marshals 430 warplanes for possible action in Kosovo

BRUSSELS (AFP) — NATO is marshalling a fleet of 430 fighters, bombers and other warplanes from the United States and its allies to hit possible targets in Serbia, the dominant republic in the ex-Yugoslavia.

In contrast, the Yugoslav air force has 79 Russian-built MiG warplanes as well as a broad air-defence network with surface-to-air missiles.

The first of six U.S. B-52 warplanes, which can each carry 20 cruise missiles, landed Sunday at the Royal Air Force base at Fairford in southwest England following a flight from Barksdale, Louisiana.

The Pentagon said the move brought them nearer to the potential battle zone around Serbia.

The allies have also been moving air power to bases in Italy, which would be used to launch many of the air strikes on targets in Serbia. The NATO southern command is located in

Naples.

Allied warships and submarines in the Mediterranean or Adriatic Sea were also equipped to fire cruise missiles.

The United States was contributing 260 aircraft — or 60 per cent of allied air power — with around 130 fighters, two long-range B-2 Stealth bombers, a dozen F-117 Stealth fighter-bombers, six B-52s in England, F-15 and F-16 fighters based in Italy and Germany, as well as F-14s on the USS Eisenhower aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean Sea.

The next largest contributors of the NATO force are France with around 20 Jaguar and Mirage warplanes; Britain with four Harrier fighter bombers deployed in Italy; the Netherlands with 16 F-16 fighters and two refuelling KC-10 planes; and Germany with 14 Tornado fighters.

Belgium has pledged 10 F-16s, Norway eight F-16s.

Canada six CF-18 fighters, Turkey four or five combat planes, Spain four F-18 bombers and a transport plane, Denmark four F-16s, Portugal three F-16 and Italy several Tornados.

Greece, a traditional ally of Serbia, has declined to commit aircraft.

Faced with this array of forces, Yugoslavia has 79 MiG warplanes — 47 MiG-21-F, 17 MiG-21U and 15 MiG-29, according to the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London.

The Serbs also have eight surface-to-air missile batteries at eight different sites, and their arsenal includes at least 100 surface-to-air Sam, with a range of 2-16 kilometres, the IIS said.

Their Sam 6 has been upgraded recently and Belgrade is believed to have linked its air-defence network with a similar one in ethnic Serb-ruled areas of Bosnia to detect eventual NATO air raids as early as possible.



Famous Russian trainer Irina Zapashnaya dances with a sea-lion during a show in St. Petersburg. The Circus of St. Petersburg marks its 120th anniversary this year (Reuters photo)

## Forensic experts start exhumation from biggest mass grave in Bosnia

TUZLA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Forensic experts Sunday began exhuming more than 240 bodies from the biggest mass grave discovered in Bosnia.

The government-run Commission for Missing Persons and the Boston-based Physicians for Human Rights found the mass grave five days ago in village of Donja Glumina, about 35 kilometres east of Tuzla in an area controlled by Bosnian Serbs.

The bodies were believed to be

those of Bosnian Muslims killed at the beginning of the 1992-1995 Bosnian war. The grave was found with the help of witnesses who claimed they saw Yugoslav army troops bury the remains.

The bodies were transported to Tuzla, where experts will try to identify them.

Since 1996, about 1,800 bodies have been recovered from various mass graves in this area, but only a few of them have been identified.

Officials say most of the bodies recovered from

mass graves in the eastern Bosnia region are believed to have been residents of the town of Srebrenica, overrun by the Serbs in July 1995.

Amor Masovic, the head of the Commission for Missing People, said he was optimistic that more of those found in the latest grave will be identified because "a lot of personal things" were recovered with the bodies.

Most of the bodies, dressed in civilian clothes, are in military plastic bags, officials said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Observer of German post-war conscience wins author's prize

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Martin Walser, whose novels explore the conscience of Germans rebuilding the nation after the Nazi era and World War II, was awarded the prestigious Peace Prize at the Frankfurt International Book Fair Sunday. In a ceremony at St. Paul's Church that included President Roman Herzog, the 71-year-old German author was praised as one of the country's most important literary figures. Walser's novels and essays "explained to the world and to Germans their own country and brought them closer together," said the German Book Trade Association awards committee, which awarded the 25,000-mark (\$15,300) prize. Walser was an early critic of the cold war division of Germany. One of his best known works, the spy novel "Dode and Wolf," decries the nation's east-west barrier and the political scare campaigns on both sides of the border. Walser, who has also written for the stage, tries to reconcile German guilt over the Holocaust with a young postwar generation's desire to look to the future. He "struggles with the great paradox of his generation: objectively not guilty, maybe even having been happy, and at the same time by birth certificate part of a larger, guilty whole," said Frank Schirrmacher, literary editor for the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper. The prize, awarded annually since 1950, is seen as the high point of the book fair, the world's largest with some 6,500 exhibitors from 105 countries. Last year's winner was Turkish novelist and human rights activist Yasar Kemal, whose works describe the plight of Kurds in southeastern Turkey.

### Peru dislikes international proposal for Ecuador border peace

LIMA (AFP) — Peru has attacked a formula that would commit it and Ecuador to accepting an imposed settlement to end the long-running border dispute between the two countries. Lima said the formula proposed by Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso late Saturday, on behalf of the five countries charged with overseeing a peaceful end to the problem, was "arbitrary". It also said the ultimatum, which Cardoso issued to his Peruvian and Ecuadorian counterparts, was "contrary to Peruvian interests". The proposals call on Peru and Ecuador to agree to accept a binding settlement to the disputed frontier, and stipulate that the Congresses of both countries should approve the formula by Oct. 17. It would then have to be signed by Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, and Ecuadorian President Jamil Mahuad. Cardoso also proposed inviting Pope John Paul II to bless any Peru-Ecuador peace agreement. Talks between Peru and Ecuador have stalled over boundary demarcation of a 78 kilometre stretch of remote jungle-covered hills that both countries claim. Border negotiations are a sensitive issue in Peru, and over the past weeks Peru's top three foreign affairs officials resigned over disagreements with Fujimori on the boundary negotiations.

### Swaziland flooded with applications for hangman

MBABANE (AFP) — More than 50 people from as far afield as Britain and Japan have applied for the vacant post of Swaziland hangman, Justice Minister Paul Khumalo said Sunday. Swaziland was forced to advertise the vacancy after its previous hangman deserted his post more than 13 years ago and no local citizens could be convinced to replace him. Khumalo told the SABA news agency he had "more than enough" applications, and had received responses from Canada, Britain, South Africa and even Japan. "We first advertised in February, and my office has been flooded since with masses of applications," Khumalo said. "Although we've heard from people all over the world, the vast majority are from South Africa." Khumalo said there were eight prisoners on death row at Matsapa prison. "We are looking for a brave young man who has what it takes, and the successful candidate will have to start immediately," he added. Khumalo was, however, unable to say when his department would start interviewing applicants. "We don't need any experience or degree, but the applicant must be a very brave and classically educated person." He would not say how many women had applied for the job. Swaziland's Justice Minister Chief Maweni Simelane has said that the kingdom already has the required equipment for executions. An upsurge in the number of death sentences delivered by courts forced the government to "revive" the practice of hanging criminals, he said. The last execution in Swaziland was in 1983 when high-profile businessman Phillipa Mdhuli was hanged for the ritual murder of her domestic worker's son.

### Legionnaire's disease at French hospital kills two

TARBES, France (R) — Two aged patients have died and three other people are ill following an outbreak of Legionnaires disease late last month in a hospital in this southwest France town, health officials revealed Sunday. A further 70 people who were treated in the same hospital recently were also prescribed antibiotic treatments as a precaution, the officials said. The virus was transmitted in the hospital by vapours rising from hot water used in treatments, they said. Legionnaires disease was first diagnosed in the United States in 1976 when several deaths were recorded at a convention of the American Legion, a veterans group, among people sleeping in a hotel where the virus was transmitted through the air conditioning system. In a separate incident, 152 people were overcome late Saturday by fumes from a faulty electrical generator used to heat a hall where several hundred Africans were celebrating a wedding in a northern Paris suburb, officials said. Hospitals said 11 people were in serious condition and two in a critical state. The bride was among those less seriously affected, they said.

### Owner and pilot charged in Spanish boat tragedy

GIRONA, Spain (AP) — The owner and the pilot of a pleasure boat which sank killing 20 French retirees earlier this week in northeastern Spain, have been charged with manslaughter and released on bail. Investigative judge Montserrat Basit set bail at five million pesetas (\$33,780) for Bartolome Gayola, the owner of the boat, and Captain Simon Rodriguez after questioning the two men for more than five hours Saturday. The judicial order said the two men must not leave Spain and must present themselves to the court every day. Basit also reviewed a report that blamed the accident on serious mechanical problems of the boat. The technical evaluation, drawn up by a naval engineer at the request of local authorities, uncovered that the owner of the boat had changed the engine before the accident and had also modified the ventilation ducts. Early investigations had said overloading was the main cause of the tragedy. Designed for 80 passengers, Thursday when its stern began to sink just after it pulled away from port. The 20 victims were elderly pensioners from western France who were on vacation in Spain. Repatriation of the corpses was due to begin Sunday.

## United States Congress votes to combat religious persecution

WASHINGTON (R) — Congress Saturday approved new U.S. efforts to stop religious persecution around the world, legislation hailed by the Clinton administration because it would not trigger punitive sanctions on any government.

The House of Representatives approved the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act without dissent, one day after it cleared the Senate on a unanimous 98-0 vote. It would give

the White House a variety of tools to combat religious persecution as part of Washington's goal of promoting human rights internationally.

Supporters said the bill grew out of concern that over half the world's population lives under governments that severely restrict, or prohibit, religious practices.

Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat said at a State Department news conference Friday that the bill would allow

President Bill Clinton to balance the complex ranges of U.S. interests and promote religious liberty without causing it to become a contentious issue.

For countries found to practise religious persecution, the president will have 15 policy responses available — eight diplomatic and seven prohibitions on U.S. aid or economic sanctions. The options range from diplomatic protest and cutting off of diplomatic exchanges to limits on export

licences and votes against loans made by international financial institutions.

Clinton would be required to consult with other governments, however, before ordering any punishment and could waive sanctions if U.S. national interests would be harmed. Any U.S. response must be targeted towards ending the religious persecution, its effectiveness must be evaluated and sanctions would be limited to two years. The legislation repre-

sents a compromise between religious groups and business interests who had feared the mandatory sanctions required in an earlier version would backfire on U.S. economic interests overseas.

Under this legislation the State Department will have to investigate charges of oppression based on religion and report to Congress annually.

The legislation was supported by an array of groups including the Episcopal Church,

B'nai B'rith International, the Catholic Conference and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The new bill sets up an Office of International Religious Freedom in the State Department whose head would have the rank of ambassador. It also sets up a four-year commission on Religious Freedom whose nine members would be appointed by Congress and the president.

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IN BRIEF

German post-war  
wins author's prize

(AP) — Martin Walser, whose novel "Dorle and Wolf" depicts the world of Germans rebuilding after World War II, was awarded the Frankfurt International Book Prize, the 71-year-old German author's most important literary prize, for his latest novel, "The Flood," which depicts the world of Germans after the war.

International proper  
for border peace

is attacked a formula that would keep an imposed settlement in place between the two sides, a proposal by Brazil's President Cardoso, on Oct. 10, with over-seeing a peaceful settlement. It also said the summit between Peru and Ecuador on Oct. 11, 1998, was a step towards a binding settlement. The proposal is to accept a binding settlement, but the Congress is expected to reject it. The summit between Peru and Ecuador on Oct. 11, 1998, was a step towards a binding settlement. The proposal is to accept a binding settlement, but the Congress is expected to reject it.

land flooded  
ations for hangman

More than 100 people have been killed in the floods in the state of Bahia, Brazil, on Oct. 11, 1998. The floods were caused by heavy rain and have caused significant damage to property and infrastructure. The state government has declared a state of emergency and is providing relief to the affected population.

naire's disease  
hospital kills two

Two people have died in a hospital in the state of Bahia, Brazil, on Oct. 11, 1998. The deaths were caused by a disease that is spread by contact with the body fluids of an infected person. The hospital has taken measures to prevent the spread of the disease and is providing medical care to the remaining patients.

and pilot charged  
ish boat tragedy

The captain and pilot of a small boat were charged with negligence after a tragedy on Oct. 11, 1998. The boat was carrying a group of people and was involved in a collision with another vessel. The captain and pilot were charged with failing to take proper precautions to avoid the collision.

## Blair: Sino-British ties on new footing

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair returned from a five-day China tour Sunday full of optimism that Sino-British business ties were now "on a completely new footing" and that Beijing was clear on where Britain stood on human rights.

"There is a new relationship there which is very important not just for commerce and trade, but because if China is going to be one of the big powers of the 21st century it is right that Britain has a good relationship with them," Blair said on the flight back to London.

Much of the premier's trip was dogged by criticism from activists that Britain had sold out to China over human rights issues in return for better commercial prospects. That tone turned particularly sharp on his final leg, when he arrived in the former British colony of Hong Kong.

But Blair told journalists that "we have made it plain what our position is on democracy and on human rights," and that "the relationship is now one of strength."

The Chinese leaders listened politely when Blair raised what he obliquely referred to as "persistent" differences over Beijing's record on human rights and democracy, but no promises were entered into.

It was clear that Blair was sticking by his government's belief that direct confrontation would not bring China around on such prickly issues, but that an increasingly open dialogue fuelled by the imperatives of global trade might.

Blair said: "The principal thing I have learned is that in my view there is no doubt the opening up will continue and that it's only a question of pace, not the direction."

The British media, however, seized on the controversy, reporting that while Blair's business focus was fruitful and necessary, an opportunity was missed to take a leading role in spreading democracy in the world.

The Observer newspaper described how "Britain pined with China Inc. last week" and more than one publication noted that U.S. President Bill Clinton hammered the human rights problem harder and more skillfully than Blair when he made his own visit to Beijing in June.

Even in business terms, observers stressed the disappointing level of investment made by Blair's entourage of British chiefs of industry during the trip, in which a relatively modest \$800 million worth of contracts were signed.

But the British premier pointed out to the Sunday Business magazine that other, bigger-scale projects were on the cards, notably a \$2.4 billion refinery by oil giant BP in Shanghai and "a very clear commitment" that China will buy an unspecified number of Airbus passenger aircraft.

## Former Communists get first chance to govern German state

SCHWERIN, Germany (AP) — The former East German Communists were invited to join a state government for the first time Sunday, a sign of their growing weight in German politics.

The Social Democrats in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, who came out on top in Sept. 27 state elections, offered the ex-Communists talks on forming a government coalition after rejecting a possible alliance with the Christian Democrats.

The ex-Communist Party of Democratic Socialism got its chance because voters swept the Christian Democrats from power in the economically struggling eastern state, along with Chancellor Helmut Kohl in national elections the same day.

Governor-elect Harald Ringstorff announced the offer after sounding out both the PDS and the Christian Democrats, who had led a strained coalition with the Social Democrats.

Mainstream politicians in Bonn shun the almost exclusively eastern-based PDS as a remnant of the authoritarian East German regime. But many easterners feel the party better represents their interests in a political system dominated by westerners, and the left's election triumph is changing the picture.

The Social Democrats have ruled out working with the PDS at the federal level, but party chairman Oskar Lafontaine recently backed cooperation in state politics as a way to make the ex-Communists more responsible.

He told Der Spiegel news-magazine it would take some of the shine off the ex-Communists and their assertion "that they would do everything much better, if only they were allowed to."

The PDS itself has trouble deciding. Party delegates in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania narrowly voted Saturday to leave open the possibility of staying in opposition and giving only tacit support to the Social Democrats.

Such a model has run another eastern German state, Saxony-Anhalt, since 1994. The PDS has never officially been part of a coalition government.

Even Kohl's designated heir as chairman of the Christian Democrats says the traditionally anti-Communist party must open up to former members of the Socialist Unity Party, which once ruled East Germany.

"We have to accept that there were different life paths when the country was divided," during the cold war, Wolfgang Schauble was quoted over the weekend as telling Focus magazine.

Kohl's party lost heavily in eastern Germany in the national election. Most of the support swung to the Social Democrats, but the PDS also gained, increasing its voter share to 5.1 per cent from 4.4 per cent in 1994.

## Russia fired 20 nuke soldiers on mental concerns

MOSCOW (R) — Russia has over the past two years dismissed 20 soldiers with access to nuclear weapons because of psychological problems, Interfax news agency reported Sunday.

It quoted military prosecutors as saying the 20 servicemen were dismissed from just one of the strategic missile forces in 1997-98 for problems such as psychopathy, schizophrenia and psychological instability as well as epilepsy.

The information was revealed at a conference of military prosecutors, who said servicemen in need of psychological attention often do not get the help they need.

As Russia's economic situation continues to weaken, some foreign observers have expressed concern about the safety of the country's nuclear facilities.

But the military says its vast arsenal remains safe despite the country's problems.



U.S. first lady Hillary Clinton is accompanied by orphaned children at the 'Faith, Hope and Love' centre in Sofia as she leaves the charity facility following a visit. Mrs. Clinton is on a two-day official visit to Bulgaria at the invitation of Antonina Stoyanova, the wife of Bulgarian President Petar Stoyanov (AFP photo)

## Hillary Clinton calls for end to Kosovo humanitarian crisis

SOFIA (AFP) — U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton Sunday called for an end to the "humanitarian crisis" in Kosovo, at the opening of a conference of women from Balkan states where she is a special guest.

"We must speak out for ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. We must speak out for the 250,000 displaced. We must speak with one voice to end the humanitarian crisis and the violation of humanity," Clinton said.

The wife of U.S. President Bill Clinton also expressed U.S. support for reform in the countries of southeastern Europe.

"The American people, the American government and the president of the United States will stand with you as you press ahead to meet the challenges before you," she said.

Clinton also announced "\$50 million in new grants and new funds to boost civil society in the region", of which \$6 million would go to Bulgarian non-governmental organizations.

The first lady spoke before the wives of the presidents of Macedonia, Albania, Romania, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and the wives of the prime ministers of Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. Also in attendance were the wives of the speakers of the Romanian and Bulgarian parliaments and the president of the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly, Leni Fischer.

The conference is organized by the wife of Bulgarian President Petar Stoyanov, Antonina Stoyanova.

During her two-day visit, Clinton will also hold talks with Stoyanova and will be guest of honour at a reception given by the president.

Monday, she is scheduled to meet women running small businesses and will visit the American college in Bulgaria, before leaving Sofia for Prague.

## Botha to sue over compromising photograph claims

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Former apartheid foreign minister Pik Botha is to sue police and a newspaper for 10 million rand (\$1.7 million) over claims he was photographed in bed with a black woman, Rapport newspaper said Sunday.

The report said Botha, who served as foreign minister for the apartheid government from 1977 until 1994, said he was so angry at the allegation that he wanted to confront the issue in court "so that the rumour-mongers will once and for all be quietened."

"I decided this far and no further," Botha said. "I now go to court. I am going to fight. It's the last thing I do. Everything must come out, everything. Once and for all. I want to know who is behind this sort of thing."

He said he could not ignore the report, even if he wanted to.

"I have a family. I have children. I have friends," he said. "My daughter cries and my friends phone me, upset, from everywhere, even from overseas."

The report, carried in the weekly Mail and Guardian newspaper, said alleged Mafia member Vito Palazzolo had used the photograph to blackmail Botha into ensuring he was granted South African citizenship, despite featuring on Interpol's most wanted list.

The claim was made to the newspaper by a senior policeman, who said the photograph, and others showing Botha and Palazzolo together, were in the hands of the National Intelligence Agency.

Botha told Afrikaans-language Rapport that he had telephoned National Police Commissioner George Fivaz, who had denied that the concerned police officer made the allegations against Botha.

However, he added, the Mail and Guardian editor had assured him the newspaper had a tape recording of the officer making the allegation.

He said there may well be photographs showing him standing with Palazzolo in the company of others as he had attended hundreds of meetings across South Africa.

"But I strongly deny that there could exist a photograph showing me in bed with another woman. It is with distaste that I find myself in a society where the police service propagate such rubbish."

"I owe it to myself, my children, my family and my friends not to allow the matter to rest there."

## Breakaway faction of Italy's Communists founds new party

ROME (AP) — A rebellious faction of Italy's hard-line Marxists, which last week tried to shore up the nation's first centre-left government, made the Communist party break formally Sunday and founded a new party.

Commuist Refoundation fractured last week after its No. 2, Armando Cossutta, defied party leader Fausto Bertinotti, who withdrew support for the government over the deficit-cutting 1999 budget.

Cossutta resigned as Refoundation's president and his faction backed Premier Romano Prodi's centre-left coalition in a vote of confidence. Despite the help, Italy's second-longest government since World War II fell Friday by a single vote.

The creation of Cossutta's new party, the Italian Communists, badly dilutes the power of Refoundation. Cossutta's faction represented 21 of Refoundation's 34 seats in the lower house.

Commuist Refoundation was what was left of Europe's largest Communist party after the collapse of the Soviet Union; it inspired many leftists to move towards the centre and form new parties. It got 8 per cent of the vote in the 1996 general election.

Although Refoundation was not part of Prodi's coalition, he depended on its votes to muster a majority in the lower house.

With the collapse of Prodi's government, Italy now faces a number of scenarios: a second Prodi government based on a new majority, an apolitical government of technocrats, or early elections, which the centre-right opposition wants.

Prodi headed Italy's first left-led government and the right hopes to regain its domination if Italy goes to the polls.

Cossutta fears that this is exactly what would happen and in a speech to about 3,000 followers Sunday, he blamed Bertinotti for the crisis and "opening the door for the worst forces of the right." President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro has begun consultations with political leaders and most observers are betting he'll opt for a so-called "technical" government.

Cossutta said his new party favours a technical government to help pass a 1999 budget and get Italy through the launch of the common European currency in January.

## Polish election completes shift from Communist-era administration

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — In grey and sometimes drizzly weather, Poles Sunday took the final step of Western-style government reforms by electing new regional and local councils to assume powers held by the central government during the Communist era.

During 14 hours of balloting that began at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT), voters chose from 260,000 candidates to fill 63,767 seats on provincial, district and various city and neighbourhood councils.

Official results are expected Wednesday.

Few people were voting Sunday morning, partly due to the autumn drizzle, but those at a few Warsaw polling stations said they wanted to show support for Poland's political and economic reforms.

"I believe it can still be better in Poland, although we already can live a good life after all those years of Communism," said Barbara Witkowska, a retired accountant who voted in downtown Warsaw.

But officials predicted a turnout of less than 50 per cent of the 28.6 million eligible voters, with many people unhappy over economic hardships such as high unemployment brought by Poland's post-Communist reforms. Being asked to vote a ninth time — in either referendums or elections — since Communist rule fell, many people were expected to ignore the local government balloting.

After casting his ballot in Warsaw's Wilanow district, President Aleksander Kwasniewski said any turnout figure above 40 per cent would represent success, while a lower turnout would show the nation still had to grow as a democracy.

Under the reforms, the number of provinces dropped from 49 to 16 while hundreds of regional, city and town councils were being created to take over some of the decision-making power on issues such as education, roads, housing, water supplies, environment protection and various services.

The new system creates democratic structures at the grassroots level of government in line with standards of the European Union, which Poland hopes to join early next century.

But Sunday's election was considered more a popularity contest for Poland's main political parties, as voters confused by the variety of councils they were choosing were expected to follow party recommendations.

In a backlash against the Solidarity-led rightist central government, leftist parties with roots in the Communist era were expected to do well.

Many Poles are dissatisfied with the broad social and economic reforms launched by Solidarity after 1989, which introduced unemployment and raised living costs.

Despite the lack of personal freedoms during more than four decades of Communist rule, people were guaranteed jobs and health care, education and other services were provided by the state.

A strong showing by leftist parties would be ironic, as the most poorly developed regions — where people would be expected to seek strong local representation — are those neglected by Communist rulers of the past.

## Taleban launch strikes against opposition leader

KABUL (AFP) — Heavy fighting was reported north of Kabul Sunday as independent sources confirmed that Taleban warplanes had launched a wave of raids at the apparent start of a long-awaited autumn offensive against remaining opposition troops.

Fighting was understood to be raging about 100 kilometres north of Kabul. Further casualties have been reported from a two-pronged Taleban attack launched Saturday but details remain sketchy.

"I can confirm the bombings, and the time is right for an offensive," one independent source told AFP.

Former Afghan Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masood, now a leading opposition foe of the Taleban, previously claimed that cluster bomb attacks launched by the Taleban on civilian areas had claimed at least 10 lives.

Observers in Kabul said it was understood the Taleban had begun their well-flagged offensive, after weeks of speculation the militia would make a pre-emptive strike against Masood.

A spokesman was unavailable for comment.

A Masood spokesman said the Taleban first targeted Ghorband, on Masood's north west flank to put pressure on the strategic town of Jahalsiraj, about 77 kilometres north of Kabul.

However, one independent observer said Masood's forces are well entrenched at Ghorband with the surrounding areas guarded by high mountains, narrow river valleys and few roads.

"I think it will be very difficult for the Taleban to make advance through Ghorband," he added.

A second Taleban strike was launched to the north of the Salang tunnel which passes through the Hindukush mountain range and links Kabul with northern Afghanistan, the opposition spokesman said.

However, he claimed the religious militia had "suffered serious casualties" and this had prompted three air raids against civilians in Charikar, the provincial capital of Parwan province, where Masood and his forces are based.

Across Kabul, sporadic anti-aircraft test firing could be heard while the capital's airport appeared unusually busy overnight. A city-wide dusk to dawn curfew remains in force.

Masood controls about 10 per cent of Afghanistan — stretching from the north of Kabul to the far northeast of the country — and remains the last obstacle to Taleban ambitions of assuming total control.

However, his base in the nearby Panjsher Valley was largely cut off from the outside world after the Taleban captured strategic towns in the central and northern provinces over the last two months.

This prompted speculation that Masood would strike back in a campaign designed to regain supply routes before the winter sets in, or, that the Taleban would hit first and secure recent territorial gains.

One anti-Taleban source said Masood's men had captured Takhar airport on the far north east border with Tajikistan which can be used to ferry supplies to Bagram airbase.

He said more than 200 Taleban soldiers were taken prisoner and a further 40 were killed in battle.

The Taleban have accused Russia and Iran of supplying Masood with arms through Tajikistan. Masood, an ethnic Tajik commander, has denied receiving any military support from Teheran or Moscow while the Taleban has rejected similar allegations that it receives military support from Pakistan.



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## Dialogue for all

THERE IS a lot of good that can be gained through the national dialogue that HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, launched in August and the government intends to pursue soon. What necessitates the dialogue most are the economic hardships the country faces and that cannot be tackled in isolation of the Kingdom's internal and external policies.

On the economic front, especially the prospects of quick recovery, the picture is grim. What we should expect are harsher times. The policies of economic readjustment have already taken their toll on the people. But for adjustment to yield recovery significant time is needed. This much the people must be told. But for them to accept the reality, live with it and have patience, they have to have a great deal of say in the way their affairs are handled. That is why a dialogue needs to be more pervasive both vertically and horizontally. We cannot only engage the political elite in government and opposition. People from all walks of life — from academics to labourers — should be involved. Awareness of this must be spread.

Newspapers and television should serve as the platform for the dialogue. Investigative reports that would reveal the magnitude of poverty and unemployment could help enhance the process. Data collected through the papers and through other means should be analysed and documented.

Meanwhile, one problem that the government could immediately tackle will win it a great deal of support and give it time to deal with other problems. That is corruption. While there is widespread belief among the people that corruption is rampant, the government says that is not the case and reports cases that do not really qualify as such. The government will either have to convince the people that there is no corruption or crack down on it.

We are confident that the government of Fayed Tarawneh is sincere in its effort to fight corruption, unemployment and poverty. And we are sure it is genuine in its call for dialogue.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said the government's real challenge is to privatise the Jordan Telecommunications Company, because this will be the country's credibility standard. The privatisation process has reached a point where a decision about the issue has to be made, otherwise Jordan's credibility will suffer, the writer said. Administrative and financial efforts have to be made in order to overcome the criticism and obstacles facing the privatisation policy. Continuous losses by some public institutions such as Royal Jordanian and Aqaba Railway, can help convince people who oppose privatisation, said Fanek. The Kingdom's current economic crisis, which is evident in the level of unemployment and poverty, has created a suitable atmosphere for Jordanians to ask for radical changes, claimed the writer who concluded that it is obvious that the government's control over a wide range of economic sectors has reached a dead-end.

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarwah asked that the government's administrative system be properly activated and the role of parties, Parliament and municipalities become clearly defined, in order to streamline the Kingdom's decision-making process. The government's administrative order has to remove the problems it faces, such as stagnation and corruption, to develop, he said. The Parliament's role has to be more active in representing the nation, and its legislative and monitoring authorities. Jordan's parties have to represent either national unity and its interest or Arab/Jordanian ideology. Masarwah said, claiming that the country's municipalities could form a centre of public life, development and culture.

## Economic Review

# The uncertainty makers: Friend or foe?

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

THE NOTION that people's expectations about markets determine the outcomes of these markets is not from the land of make-believe, but an economic doctrine that is respected by most economists. In fact, expectations, be they negative or positive, can shift supply and demand faster than other market determinants.

Our expectations of the future are so powerful that they are considered in some markets to be the underlying force behind the cycles of booms and busts. After all, the business cycle is naught but a result of wrong expectations as business people overestimate sales and consequently overproduce, an action they attempt to remedy by reducing production and thus increasing unemployment. Any inertia that tends to lead Jordan toward negative expectations, rumours and anarchy should be nipped in the bud through intelligent and transparent management of the democratic process and its institutions, not through policing tactics.

Uncertainty breeds speculation and arouses unnecessary fears, which the Jordanian economy can well do without. Like poverty and unemployment, uncertainty should be placed among Jordan's top priority list of evils to eliminate. People like to know what is going on and they are not willing to wait. As Beryne once noted in "Conflict, Arousal, and Curiosity," "There is a deep-seated human reluctance to wait an unnece-

sary moment for information about what the future holds, even when there is no way in which one could act on the information." Furthermore, as Tibor Scitovsky wrote in "The Joyless Economy," most of us feel that "there is a comfort in knowing the worst," in other words, bad news is more comforting than no news. Producing obstacles that inhibit the expression of ideas considered counterproductive to Jordan's "best interest" gives birth to uncertainty and speculation.

This is not to say that one should strive to do away with uncertainty in a market system. In my view uncertainty is the most realistic assumption of the market and possibly the most distinguishing characteristic between capitalist and socialist economies. On the contrary, what is needed is to ensure that the impact of the unexpected can be expected and kept manageable: in other words, make the uncertainty a pleasant experience (gamblers enjoy the game, speculators play the market whether on land or stocks or currency). The arousing or pleasant effect of uncertainty is made unpleasant when the uncertainty is maintained for a long time. In the U.S., speculation driven by uncertainty about when a bullish stock market will become bearish becomes more and more painful the longer Mr. Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve System, waits to adjust the interest rate. At the first sign of a dip in stock prices, the market can be thrown into panic and specu-

lators react drastically.

The brilliant economist, Frank Knight, addressed this issue in 1921 in his seminal work, "Risk, Uncertainty and Profit." Economies that can predict further into the future than others are better able to deal with uncertainty than those who are blundered by ignorance: "the further ahead the organisms can see, the more adequately it can adapt itself, the more fully and completely it can live..." It is evident that all organic reactions relate to future situations, further in the future as the type of life and activity is (higher). "Alas, the reverse is also true, 'We perceive the world before we react to it, and we react not to what we perceive, but always to what we infer.'" In other words, all rules and mechanism that are in place to reduce the amount of knowledge available to society in order to protect the economy, are in fact causing harm and reducing its growth, and thus making it susceptible to all kinds of speculation and unfounded rumours. By attempting to protect Jordan and its markets, advocates of greater restrictions are themselves the sowers of future gloom and could possibly be the makers of the next crisis. Waiting has always been a painful game, and like "Waiting for Godot," it is fruitless. A stroke of a pen can create wise and enlightened legislation to illuminate the population and wipe out most of the uncertainty. Let's not wait too long!





# The Hermitage of John the Abbot

NEARLY 20 years ago, during the survey of the Wadi Hasa in 1979, an archaeological team headed by Dr. Burton MacDonald of St. Francis Xavier University (Canada) identified the remains of a fascinating installation cut into the rocks at the hot springs of Wadi 'Afra. They returned to the spot and documented what turned out to be a hermitage or small monastery comprising three caves/rooms and a fourth nearby 'room'. They were nicely decorated with architectural elements, painted religious and figurative artwork, plaster, and inscriptions.

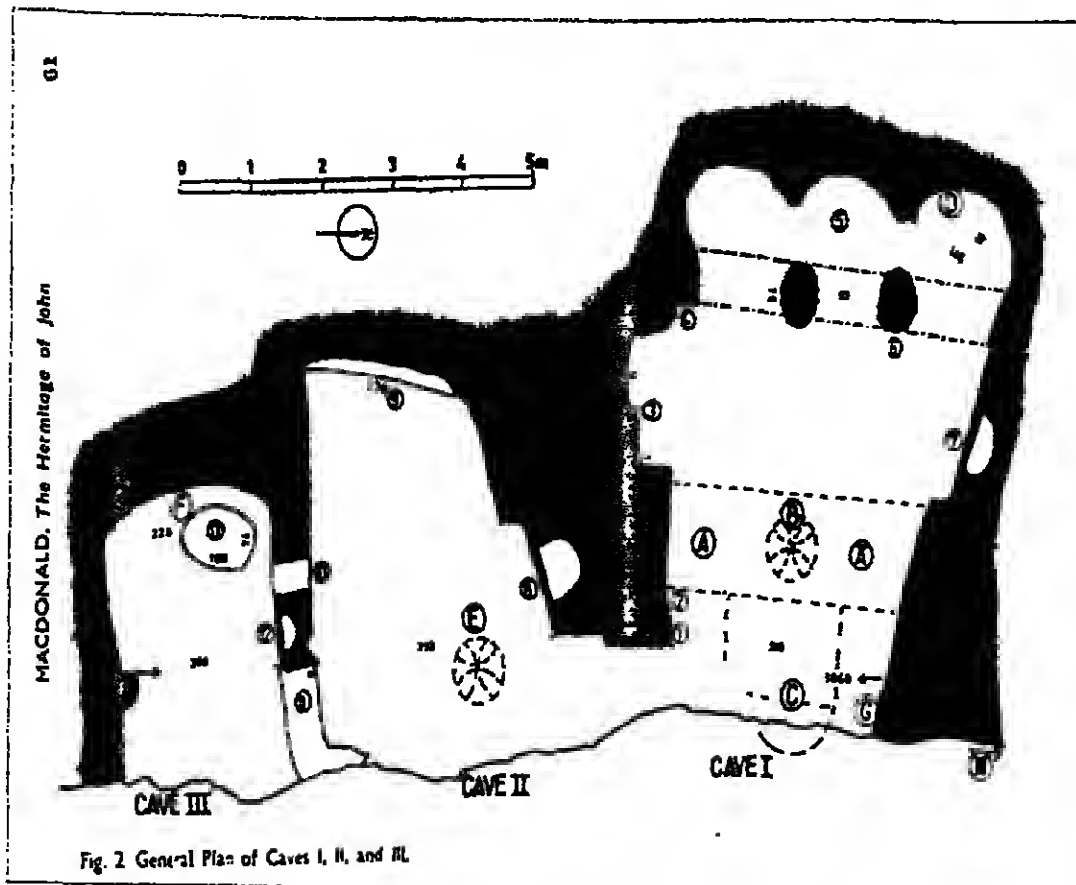
The site has been called the Hermitage of John the Abbot, after the name of John the Abbot in one of the inscriptions at the site. This fascinating facility remains reasonably well protected at the 'Afra hot springs, because it is located in an inaccessible area nearly 70 metres above the level of the Wadi waters. The hot springs at 'Afra have been recently developed for domestic tourism, and are frequented by many Jordanians from that area.

The hermitage is located in the northern part of the Wadi 'Afra, about three kilometres south of the confluence of the Wadis 'Afra and Hasa. It overlooks the Wadi from the east, and consists of three inter-connected caves. The cave-facades have eroded or snapped off and tumbled into the Wadi, but the caves probably once shared a common corridor or passageway along their front.

## Three caves

The most complex of the three caves, called Cave I, includes pilasters with incised circles, three arches and two columns (one with an oval capital) in front of three alcoves, and a niche. The adjacent Cave II has a niche, a curved shelf at the back, a step and hinge-hole that once supported a door, and an opening communicating with the smaller Cave III, which also has a niche and an enigmatic large hole cut into the floor. Dr. MacDonald said in a recent interview.

To the south of the caves and at a lower level is a small cave that was cut into the cliff-face, with a half-metre-wide circular medallion incised on the rock-face immediately south of the entrance. Faintly visible within the medallion are some Greek letters, and to its right are traces of



General plan of the three caves at 'Afra Hermitage

red-painted plaster. People approaching the caves in antiquity probably passed in front of this cave and medallion, Dr. MacDonald notes.

The last architectural feature of the hermitage complex is a peculiar small 'room' that was carved into the top of a large rock rising on the east side of the Wadi. The 'room' measures nearly 3 x 2 metres and is 1.35 metres high inside. A small entrance is cut into the rock on the south side, with remains of two flanking niches and indications of a former door.

A small hole on the north side of the 'room' gives access to the Wadi nearly 40 metres below, and the Greek letters MAEL have been cut into a rectangle near this opening. A small window was cut into the upper east wall of the structure, and four depressions were cut from the rock outside its south and west sides. Ancient steps once led to the summit of this rock-cut facility, which MacDonald suggests may have been a

hermit's cell or perhaps was "some kind of press or a container of liquid."

The only pottery sherds that were found at this hermitage were picked up from the top of this "room" in the rock, and most were from the 5th-6th century AD Byzantine period (along with a few Early Bronze Age I sherds from around 3000 BC). The combination of pottery, architecture, inscriptions and Byzantine Christian art leads Dr. MacDonald to conclude that this was a hermitage, with Cave I being a chapel or church, and Cave II serving as a hermit's cell.

This would be very much in line with the presence of numerous other isolated hermitages in the Byzantine period throughout Jordan. Known hermitages in the vicinity of 'Afra and Wadi Hasa include such facilities as Ghor es-Safi and the Lisan Peninsula near the Dead Sea coast, and at the Wadis Malih, Daffah and Franj near Karak. MacDonald's survey of

the Wadi Hasa identified Byzantine pottery at 74 of the 214 sites visited, indicating a very clear wider regional settlement context for such a Late Byzantine hermitage at Wadi 'Afra.

## Byzantine painted art

The complete and partial paintings inside the hermitage caves, on plaster and on the cave walls, are particularly interesting. Some of the motifs include medallions with crosses in the middle (prepared by using a compass to make incised lines in the

rock), with petals, circles, triangles and dots; and different combinations of triangles, lattice-work-like crossed lines, circles, squares, and dots, sometimes within distinct painted or incised panels. A painted medallion on the flat ceiling of Cave II includes a large cross, two fish, and two birds, along with various geometric lines and shapes.

Dr. MacDonald wonders whether the different decorative styles — painted plaster, painted natural rock, and incised decorations — all date from the same or different periods. It seems that only parts of the caves were decorated, using simple colours like red, black, yellow and white.

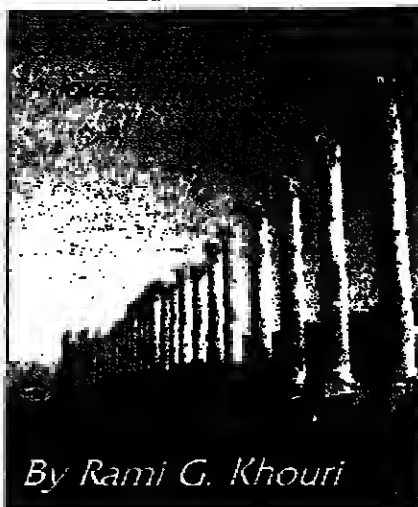
The Christian symbolism, he says, includes crosses, fish, and birds, as well as triangles and rectangles in association with Greek inscriptions. A small, 4-centimetre-high cross placed immediately in front of the Greek word THEODORON in one inscription is common in other

Byzantine inscriptions from this region.

The inscriptions include one text that is very badly eroded in Cave I. Father Michele Piccirillo of the Franciscan Archaeological Mission in Jordan says it was a dedicatory inscription giving the information that "the hermitage was finished by the zeal of the Abbot John in the month of Artemisios (perhaps the 18th of the month) of the year..."

Another partially preserved inscription "is an invocation to Jesus, Lord or God of the angels, supposed to be the archangel Michael, to protect the writer [the monk] living in the hermitage," Piccirillo said. He translates the inscription as: "O Lord Jesus Christ of the archangel of the most High, save your servant..."

The hermitage is not accessible to visitors due to its location high above the Wadi floor, and no further work is



By Rami G. Khouri

planned there for the time being. The survey of the site was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which funded the entire Hasa survey. (The only published scholarly report on this site, including fine photographs and drawings, is available in the Franciscans' annual journal Liber Annus, XXX (1980), pages 351-364.)

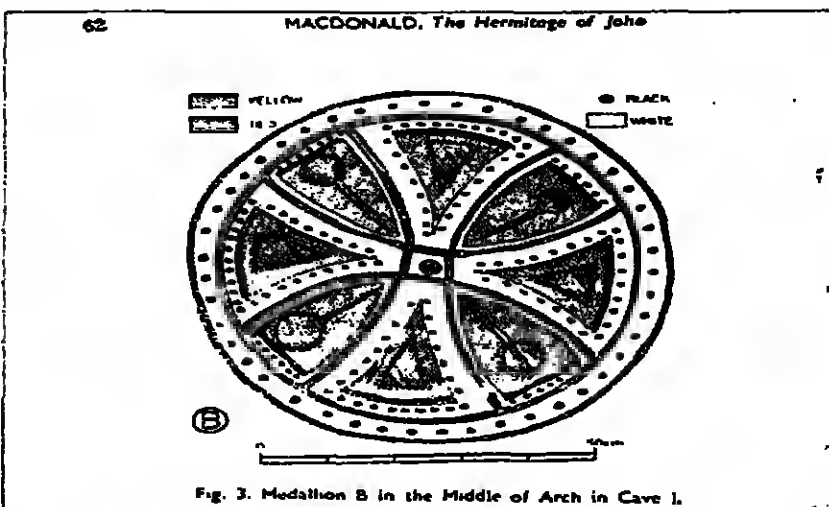
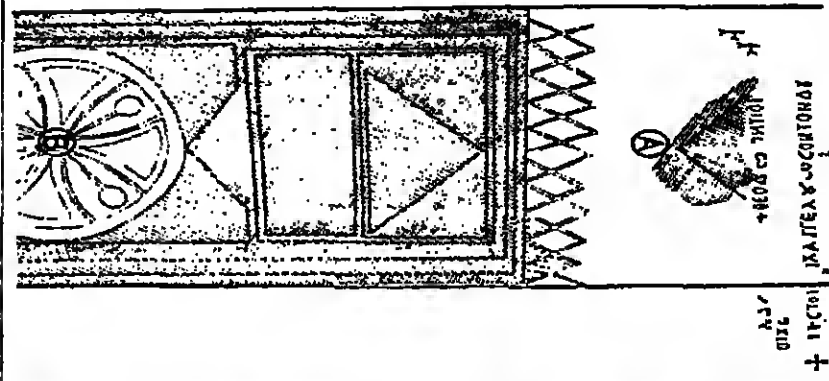


Fig. 3. Medallion in the middle of arch in Cave I.



Drawing of the medallion in the middle of the arch in Cave I. (Illustrations courtesy of Dr. Burton MacDonald)

## Health

# Rocket team has lift-off for perfect bra

By Steve Farrar

THIS COULD be the uplifting news women have been waiting years to hear. A blueprint for the perfect bra has been devised by a team of British rocket scientists.

State-of-the-art laser measuring technology, normally employed to design jet engines and oil pipelines, has been used to calculate the optimum design, which uses "intelligent" fabrics and straps to give the best more support.

Its creators expect the new design to prove so comfortable — while still flattering — that women will choose it over conventional alternatives.

Their confidence is shared by at least one top manufacturer, who is set to sign an international deal to turn the research into a commercial product.

Dr. John Tyrer, who leads the team from Loughborough University's department of mechanical engineering, hopes the first bra will be on sale by Easter next year.

The bra's basic design has not changed much since the "health braided wire dress forms" — a design looking like two soldiers' helmets — was patented in August 1885. Less daunting variations emerged in 1913 when the New York socialite Mary Phelps Jacobs got her maid to sew two handkerchiefs and a piece of ribbon together.

Today, British women buy 60 million bras every year, fuelling an industry with an annual turnover of £500 million.

Tyrer's redesign — dubbed the "Lufbra" — is the product of fundamental engineering principles which had remained undiscovered because nobody had a way of measuring the forces involved. The team's previous work involved studying vibrations in space shuttle rocket engines, the stresses in bridges and even the forces that human jawbones endure.

The engineers used a technique called electronic speckle pattern interferometry to study the shape of breasts and how they alter as a woman moves, and hence calculate how they might be best supported.

Tyrer said conventional bras did not support the weight of the bust but strapped the breasts tight against the chest and transferred the load to the wrong parts of the body, often putting too much strain on the spine.

The research team also concluded that the measurements used to determine which size of bra a woman needed — chest and cup size — were inadequate. "They tell you nothing about the size or shape of the breast; it's like trying to determine how much fuel a car takes by measuring its filler cap," said Tyrer.

At first glance the new bra looks only superficially different. But a combination of "intelligent" fabrics and straps allows the weight to be evenly distributed from the cups

throughout the upper torso. "It improves the shape of the female dramatically and could allow her to maintain the shape of her breasts throughout her life," Tyrer said.

Charlotte Wightman, a Bristol osteopath, said a bra that did not restrict the movement of the chest and gave more spinal mobility would considerably improve women's health. "If the weight of the breasts is better distributed, it means the body will be less distorted," she said.

The average size of breasts has increased in recent decades, from a 34B in the 1950s to a 36C today, said Janice Mee, head of contour fashion at De Montfort University in Leicester. This meant that more women needed more support, but modern designs were not providing it, she said.

In a study of the breast shape and size of 8,000 women, 70 per cent were found to be wearing a bra that did not fit them properly, said Stephen Gray, head of the computer clothing research centre at Nottingham Trent University.

However, Gray observed that if little had previously been scientifically understood about bras, even less was known about men's underwear. "It's not only women who are getting a bad deal; there's no statistical information about Y-fronts," he said.

—The Sunday Times

# Potassium may protect against stroke

Readers

PEOPLE WHO eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains have a lower risk of stroke and their high potassium content may explain why, U.S. researchers said on Monday.

The findings add to a growing body of evidence that vegetables, fruits and grains contain important vitamins and minerals that can protect against a range of heart disease, including heart attacks, high blood pressure and clogged arteries.

Now stroke is added to the list of diseases that plant foods can protect against.

"The beneficial effect appears to be due to the high potassium content of these diets, but other components

of fruits and vegetables may also contribute to the reduced risk of stroke," Alberto Ascherio of the Harvard School of Public Health, who led the study, said in a statement.

Ascherio's team studied nearly 44,000 men, part of an ongoing regular survey of health professionals.

Those who ate the most potassium — they were in the top fifth of potassium intake — had a 38 per cent lower risk of stroke than those in the bottom fifth, they wrote in a report in the American Heart Association's journal Circulation.

A big potassium intake means a lot of vegetables by American standards — about nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day, compared with

four a day in the group that ate the least.

A serving is about one medium fruit or half a cup of cooked vegetables.

Foods with a lot of potassium include tomatoes, spinach, bananas and oranges. "Two tomatoes and one serving of cooked spinach provide about one gramme of potassium," Ascherio said.

Fruits and vegetables are also high in magnesium and fibre and many are rich in calcium.

"While the data do not prove a causal relationship, there is strong support for a stroke-preventive effect from diets rich in potassium, magnesium and cereal fibre," Ascherio said.

"This was found to be particularly

true in individuals with high blood pressure, further suggesting that high-potassium diets might be beneficial in this segment of the population," Ascherio said.

Ascherio said men who were taking potassium supplements had a 60 per cent lower risk of stroke compared to men with high blood pressure who were not taking the supplements. Potassium supplements are often given to people on diuretics to help replace the loss of the mineral in their urine.

Research has shown people who eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains and cut their intake of fat and meat can lower their blood pressure and reduce not only the risk of heart disease but also of some forms of cancer.

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# ILO slams conditions for female labour in export-based economic zones

GENEVA (AFP) — Special economic zones set up to attract foreign investors to developing countries have created jobs for millions of women but too often working conditions and wages are poor and local economies derive little benefit from the zones, a critical report has said.

In the report, the Geneva-based International Labour Organisation (ILO) said about 27 million workers, 90 per cent of them women, were employed in more than 850 so-called Export Processing Zones (EPZ) around the world — a trend which had seen

rapid development in recent decades.

These EPZs import materials from industrialised countries which are processed and reexported. The zones were usually enclaves where factories specialised in a single type of product: textiles, garments, electronics for example, and had become a key feature of the drive to globalise the economy, the ILO report said.

"While EPZs are undoubtedly huge employment generators, particularly for women in developing countries, too many of them continue to be hampered by a reputation for low wages, poor

working conditions and underdeveloped labour relations systems," the 57-page report added.

Moreover, there was often no link between the EPZs and the economy of the rest of the country, said the ILO. Only a handful of governments had managed to impose transfers of technology and know-how likely to benefit their own industries and local workers, the report said.

The highest number of EPZs was in North America — 320 zones in all — located along the U.S.-Mexican border and representing \$5 billion in exports for Mexico, 30

per cent of its total, the report said.

The second area where EPZs were most numerous was Asia with a total of 225 zones: 124 in China, 35 in the Philippines and 26 in Indonesia, the ILO noted.

One of the characteristics of many EPZs was that workers, both men and women, were given only low-paid jobs requiring little skill.

As a result, they were regarded as easily replaceable and were neglected in social and professional relations, the ILO said.

Women were the main victims because they

made up the vast majority of EPZ workers and suffered worse than the men from the long working days, pittance wages, the absence of such support structures and nurseries and day care centers and the often painful nature of the work itself, the report said.

The ILO said it was rare that even minimal social norms, trade union freedoms and the principle of collective negotiations were respected in these zones, even when governments claimed that national labour legislation applied also to the EPZs.

## Asia's banks hold \$1,180b in problem loans — Lehman's

TOKYO (AFP) — Asia's banks are holding \$1,180 billion in problem loans and face a long, slow road to recovery, the U.S. investment bank Lehman Brothers said in a report.

It will take some \$386 billion to recapitalize the banks, the report said, with Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia the region's most troubled nations.

"This is no small matter to deal with and the costs will continue to rise until these economies get back on their feet," Robert Zielinski, Lehman's Asian banking analyst, said in the report.

Securing a recovery would take more than just pouring money into the banks and writing off their bad loans, he said.

Banks in Asia, with China and India excluded in the report, hold \$13,580 billion in total assets, of which 15 per cent are problem loans.

"We think the collapse of the baht in Thailand in July 1997 was as significant to Asia as the fall of the Berlin Wall was to Eastern Europe. It signalled that the old

ways of running economies and doing business were over, particularly for lenders and borrowers."

Asian countries controlled their banking industries with regulation, directed lending, permitted oligopolies, limiting the number of banks and outright state ownership.

That spiralled out of control and left the region in its current crisis. On July 2, 1997, when Bangkok effectively devalued the baht in a free float, the depth of the risks became suddenly all too clear.

Japanese banks are now holding problem loans worth \$842 billion, Lehman said, a figure considerably higher than the conservative \$650 billion admitted by Tokyo.

Banks' problem loans in South Korea total \$122 billion, in Thailand \$80 billion and in Indonesia \$36 billion.

"A bitter struggle is now underway between the old Asian economic ideology, best exemplified by Japan with its bureaucracy, regulations and lack of trans-

parency and that of the free market," Lehman indicated. "The willingness of governments to accept market forces or resist them will determine the timing and extent of recovery."

So far the best progress has been made by Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea, Lehman said, although across the region "governments have pursued a hit-or-miss approach to rebuilding their banking industries."

In Malaysia however, with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's recently introduced capital controls, the picture is far bleaker.

"Poor policy decisions essentially have cut off foreign investment and created a major problem in the banking system and the economy," the report said.

Instead Asian nations must recognise there is a serious problem and start taking action, by raising interest rates, restricting lending and nationalising banks, Lehman said.

Then improved regulations should be set down as

a foundation and banks be made to admit the true level of their bad loans and restructure their assets.

Finally once investors can be confident the worst is over, banks should recapitalize, possibly with government guarantees. Then governments should restructure the industry by cutting interest rates.

Lehman insisted the rest of the world's economies should share the burden.

"If after these countries go through the painful

process of restructuring, foreign investors and foreign governments fail to show that they support these changes when it counts, with their pocketbooks, then it will appear all for naught," the report said.

"Developed countries should not have pushed for an opening up of capital markets if they are unwilling to deal with the financial outcome: the collapse of a financial bubble," Lehman concluded.

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Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	ESP	SEK	NOK
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6325	0.6967	1.3239	116.40	1.5897	1617.70	1.8411	5.4748
DE Mark	0.6128	1.0000	0.5951	0.8110	71.31	0.9429	890.63	1.1277	3.3628
GB Sterling	1.7045	2.7833	1.0000	2.2698	188.49	2.6244	2767.37	3.1382	9.3513
CH Franc	0.7693	1.2322	0.4428	1.0000	87.90	1.1621	1221.00	138.96	4.1320
JP Yen	0.0086	1.4013	0.5033	1.1384	1.0000	1.3216	13.89	168.03	4.8891
CA Dollar	0.6495	1.0596	0.3808	0.8893	1.32	1.0489	98.38	1.1950	3.5833
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0091	0.3824	0.8916	1391.21	0.9510	11.38	3.3840	2.9727
NL Guilder	0.5432	0.8838	0.3184	0.7181	63.19	0.8361	878.42	101.35	2.9727
FR Franc	0.1827	0.2982	0.1071	0.2410	21.25	0.2512	33.63	33.6300	-
Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	ESP	SEK	NOK
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6325	0.6967	1.3239	116.40	1.5897	1617.70	1.8411	5.4748
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	2.2887	0.8517	1.8337	0.4240	5.1803	2118.48	4.8032	-
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.4354	0.1649	0.3537	0.0002	0.98	400.48	0.9080	-
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	4.2888	1.5897	3.4628	0.7978	9.74	3984.40	0.9330	-
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.4488	0.1649	0.3537	0.0002	0.98	400.48	0.9080	-
Kuwait Dinar	3.3263	5.3884	1.9841	4.2888	12.11	12.22	4896.17	0.9306	-
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.4468	0.1649	0.3537	0.0002	0.98	400.48	0.9080	-
Lebanese/1000	0.67	1.0911	0.4028	0.8893	1.32	1.0489	98.38	1.1950	-
Egyptian	0.2338	0.3824	0.1384	0.3010	0.0002	0.98	400.48	0.9080	-
Energy									
Oil	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	ESP	SEK	NOK
Brent	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
WTI	14.80	24.13	8.98	19.44	168.49	2.6244	2767.37	3.1382	9.3513
Bombay	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dubai	12.72	20.39	7.58	16.58	143.27	2.1662	2166.22	2.4166	7.2498
U/L Gas	147.00	241.00	89.00	194.40	1684.90	26.2440	2767.37	3.1382	9.3513
Metal Prices									
Commodity	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	ESP	SEK	NOK
Gold (oz's)	296.5	488.0	181.0	401.0	3410.0	43.80	1710.0	4.80	13.50
Silver (oz's)	4.98	8.01	3.01	6.51	55.10	7.00	271.00	7.00	19.00
Platinum (oz's)	343	561.0	211.0	451.0	3760.0	47.60	1860.0	50.00	135.00
AL (3 Months)	1358	2211.0	848.0	1841.0	15380.0	1948.0	7580.0	201.00	548.00
CU (3 Months)	1805	2911.0	1101.0	2381.0	19810.0	2481.0	9381.0	251.00	661.00
Zinc (3 Months)	950	1551.0	591.0	1281.0	10610.0	1331.0	4861.0	131.00	341.00
Lead (3 Months)	607	991.0	371.0	801.0	6610.0	831.0	3011.0	81.00	211.00
Ni (3 Months)	3870	6281.0	2381.0	5181.0	42810.0	5381.0	19811.0	531.00	1381.00
Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	ESP	SEK	NOK
US Dollar	5.4063	8.9438	3.1823	6.9378	58.00	7.40	281.00	7.40	19.00
GB Sterling	7.3672	11.8400	4.0000	8.8000	73.60	9.36	351.00	9.36	24.00
JPY	0.0086	1.4013	0.5033	1.1384	1.0000	1.3216	13.89	168.03	4.8891
DEM	0.6128	1.0000	0.5951	0.8110	71.31	0.9429	890.63	1.1277	3.3628
FRF	0.1827	0.2982	0.1071	0.2410	21.25	0.2512	33.63	33.6300	-
CHF	0.7693	1.2322	0.4428	1.0000	87.90	1.1621	1221.00	138.96	4.1320
ITL	0.0008	1.0091	0.3824	0.8916	1391.21	0.9510	11.38	3.3840	2.9727
ESP	0.0008	1.0091	0.3824	0.8916	1391.21	0.9510	11.38	3.3840	2.9727
Main Equity Indices									
Index	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	ESP	SEK	NOK
New York	7899.52	12781.0	4881.0	10681.0	89810.0	11181.0	4181.0	1081.0	2811.0
DOW JONES	7899.52	12781.0	4881.0	10681.0	89810.0	11181.0	4181.0	1081.0	2811.0
S&P 500	984.32	1611.0	591.0	1281.0	10681.0	1331.0	4861.0	131.00	341.00
FT-SE 100	4823.4	7911.0	2811.0	6181.0	51810.0	6481.0	2381.0	601.00	1581.00
NIKKEI 225	12879.97	20811.0	7811.0	17181.0	143810.0	17481.0	6381.0	1681.00	4281.00
CAC 40	3092.9	5081.0	1811.0	4011.0	33810.0	4181.0	1581.0	401.00	1011.00
DAX	3963.85	6481.0	2381.0	5181.0	42810.0	5381.0	1981.0	501.00	1281.00
Energy									
Commodity	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	ESP	SEK	NOK
Coffee (c/lbs)	112.88	184.0	68.0	148.0	1240.0	15.80	581.00	15.80	40.00
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1966	3211.0	1181.0	2581.0	21810.0	2711.0	981.00	251.00	641.00
Sugar (\$/ton)	216.8	351.0	128.0	281.0	2381.0	291.0	1081.00	291.00	741.00
Wheat (\$/ton)	121.7	198.0	71.0	158.0	1331.0	16.30	581.00	16.30	41.00
Soya (c/lbs)	26.03	42.40	15.40	33.40	281.0	3.50	128.00	3.50	8.80
Tea (kg/kg)	125	201.0	74.0	161.0	1331.0	16.30	581.00	16.30	41.00
Barley (\$/ton)	2.39	3.91.0	1.41.0	3.01.0	25.10	3.10	118.00	3.10	7.80
Rice (\$/ton)	406	661.0	241.0	531.0	4481.0	551.0	1981.00	551.00	1381.00
JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	ESP	SEK	NOK
US Dollar	0.708	1.148	0.418	0.918	7.710	0.978	36.100	0.978	25.100
GB Sterling	1.2662	2.066	0.746	1.646	13.710	1.716	63.100	1.716	43.100
DE Mark	0.4331	0.716	0.266	0.586	4.910	0.616	22.100	0.616	15.100
CH Franc	0.6362	1.046	0.386	0.846	7.110	0.896	33.100	0.896	22.100
FR Franc	0.1282	0.208	0.078	0.178	1.410	0.178	6.100	0.178	4.100
JP Yen	0.0086	1.4013	0.5033	1.1384	1.0000	1.3216	13.89	168.03	4.8891
NL Guilder	0.5432	0.8838	0.3184	0.7181	63.19	0.8361	878.42	101.35	2.9727
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0091	0.3824	0.8916	1391.21	0.9510	11.38	3.3840	2.9727

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Course Name	Description
Drawing in pencil (1)	Shading in pencil to create the three dimensional perspective; drawing the still life such as flowers and fruit baskets.
Drawing in pencil (2)	Differentiating between colors in pencil drawing to produce tonalities of color still life such as glass and metal shapes.
Watercolor (1)	Understanding color theory. Painting of color still life using the basic color technique of painting on dry paper.
Ceramics (1)	Initial instruction in basic decorating and engraving techniques; handbuilding of simple objects and ware.
Ceramics (2)	A continuation of instruction in traditional handbuilding techniques; initial instruction in glazing techniques.
Sculpture (1)	Building sculpture in clay over a wire armature, then making the mold to produce the permanent sculpture.



## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Malki says 'bright expectations' are key to push up investments, growth

ABDULLA AL MALKI, a well known economic writer and analyst, has called for a new economic strategy which would amend the strategy of the economic adjustment programme. Lecturing at the Arab Forum on the economic situation in Jordan, Malki said that the economic crisis at the beginning of 1989 has led to the adoption of the adjustment programme which brought us to the present situation characterised by recession, poverty, deepening unemployment and the same high level of foreign debt.

"We are standing on the threshold of a difficult decade while suffering from recession and stagnant growth," the lecturer said describing economic growth as the engine of the economy. "When there is no growth, problems arise," Malki stressed, as he also emphasised that the absence of growth means investment shortage. "But why are the people not investing?" he exclaimed. The answer according to Malki is that when there is no expectations for profit there is no investment. "One of the central concepts of investment is expectation and the expectations in Jordan have dimmed," he said.

Malki described the adjustment programme as an economic contraction measure because it aimed at plugging the budget deficit. As such, taxes were raised, credits were restricted under fixed ceilings and interest rates were hiked, he said noting that high interest stifles growth and kills investment because it would make it expensive. Malki, former director general of the Association of Banks in Jordan and

## Saudi Arabia to study use of oil futures

NEW YORK (R) — In a move that could ultimately have a significant impact on world oil markets, Saudi Arabia's state oil company, Saudi Aramco, is to study the use of futures and other derivatives as a tool to hedge against falling oil prices.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer and exporter, has long shunned the use of futures, largely because of worries that its participation in the market would be so influential, akin to the Federal Reserve's position in the money markets.

However, futures have come to play a pivotal role in setting world oil prices since they began in the 1970s and other world oil producers, such as Venezuela and Mexico, have started derivatives trading operations to try to manage their price risk.

Also, the latest collapse of world oil prices over the past year has led Saudi Arabia and others to consider changing the old order, which was dominated by the group quota system of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). And within Saudi Arabia, there has been a move toward liberalising the economy, including recent talks by their apparent Crown Prince Abdullah with oil company executives about the possibility of participation in some parts of the Saudi energy sector, such as natural gas

and power.

The derivatives training course for the Saudi executives is to be run by the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), the world's largest exchange for oil and other energy futures. It is expected to begin in early November and cover all aspects of futures, options and other derivative securities trading, including accounting and the back office systems needed to support such an operation, according to sources familiar with Aramco's plans.

"It's a big deal," said Ed Krapels, director of Energy Security Analysis Inc. in Boston and an energy derivatives expert. "It's a

good sign and in keeping with other moves to liberalise."

Its impact on Saudi Arabia and on the oil markets depends on whether and how the Saudis follow through on their initial study of the futures market. If they take a very conservative approach and slowly build up a programme designed to smooth the impact of volatile oil prices on the country's revenues, which have been cut 50 per cent over the past year, then the impact would be benign, Krapels said. But if they were to view the derivatives markets as a method to try to prop up oil prices, then it could be very disruptive.

"The analogy with the Federal Reserve (Fed) is a good one because the Fed has influence, but it's limited," said Krapels. "If the market thought the Saudis had a view on where prices ought to be, it would trade against that view. That would be a fool's game and never succeed."

The decision is likely to be hotly debated within

Saudi Arabia.

"Other countries do it — Mexico and Venezuela — but for Saudi Arabia, it's different," said a consultant currently working for Saudi Arabia, who didn't want to be named. "The problem for the market is that Saudi Arabia has better information than anyone else."

He said that Saudi Arabian officials understand that if their trading in the futures market became a liability, it would undermine the market's integrity and kill futures trading. So, they are likely to be extremely careful in their approach to the market as destroying futures trading would not be in their long-term interest.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
JORDANIAN BANK CENTRAL BANK AMMAN											
TELEPHONE: 5607171 / 5607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 11/10/1998											
PART	12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / S	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE	
HIGH	LOW				TRANS.	SHARES	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE		
#	385,300	170,000	ARAB BANK	16.7	.98	18	200	40710	202.00	204.00	2.00
#	1,940	1,520	JOR. PETROL. BK.	12.2	4.64	7	4750	7178	1.52	1.51	0.02
#	2,200	1,000	BANK OF JORDAN	8	0.00	13	4050	4472	1.07	1.11	0.04
#	2,640	1,550	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.9	6.69	2	280	542	1.57	1.55	0.02
#	6,510	2,610	THE JORDANIAN BK.	18.1	2.51	22	8478	24026	2.81	2.85	0.04
#	3,310	1,670	JOR. PETROL. BANK	9	0.00	8	4828	7226	1.54	1.57	0.02
#	2,900	1,250	JOR. PETROL. BANK	17.4	0.00	2	750	1275	1.70	1.70	0.00
#	850	600	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	8	7150	4675	1.42	1.40	0.02
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 270.38 %CHG: +0.91 86 44511 105202											
#	2,250	1,800	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	9.2	0.00	2	3960	7602	1.94	1.92	0.02
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 127.77 %CHG: -0.11 3 2960 7602											
#	2,240	1,410	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.3	5.72	14	3950	5659	1.42	1.44	0.02
#	2,850	1,550	JORD. ELECTRICITY	11.7	5.26	18	2250	4141	1.86	1.90	0.04
#	8,500	3,200	HIDEX MINERALS	72.2	0.00	2	80474	254890	4.50	4.41	0.09
#	4,010	4,010	HIDEX MINERALS / NEW	7.0	2.96	22	5100	22960	4.01	4.02	0.02
#	5,200	3,550	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	19.2	2.19	2	5100	22960	4.01	4.02	0.02
#	1,300	700	KATL. PORTFOLIO	27.5	0.00	2	1200	828	0.70	0.69	0.01
#	4,600	1,880	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.2	2.14	1	700	1209	1.88	1.87	0.01
#	1,790	1,060	UNIFIED CO.	4.8	10.09	12	2600	2865	1.12	1.09	0.03
#	500	1,10	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	1500	750	1.50	1.50	0.00
#	1,250	1,050	UNION FOR FINANC. INV.	1.5	6.49	1	5000	5850	1.11	1.17	0.06
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 105.81 %CHG: +0.57 62 220026 865134											
#	3,500	1,840	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	11.0	5.95	15	2034	2746	1.84	1.85	0.01
#	11,250	10,050	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	8.49	12	1047	10959	10.45	10.47	0.02
#	1,610	1,550	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	67.4	0.00	2	117	133	1.14	1.14	0.00
#	2,740	2,400	ARAB PETROL. WARE.	7.0	2.96	22	5272	12583	2.54	2.52	0.02
#	2,940	2,650	JORDAN DAIRY	6.1	10.25	2	114	309	2.70	2.71	0.01
#	2,280	1,370	GENERAL INVESTING	6.2	4.64	1	300	453	1.58	1.51	0.07
#	6,250	4,700	DAR ALADAMA INV. INV.	6.2	6.80	14	2800	14420	5.15	5.15	0.00
#	2,980	1,700	ARAB ALUM. IND.	13.3	11.89	1	800	1799	1.80	1.80	0.00
#	520	380	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	12.8	0.00	19	15700	5968	2.38	2.38	0.00
#	3,710	1,880	GENERAL INVESTMENT	14.6	2.12	4	24000	72280	3.20	3.20	0.00
#	790	370	NATIONAL SECUR.	9	0.00	8	1600	2686	4.6	4.8	0.2
#	610	330	NATIONAL TRD.	9	0.00	1	35700	25351	4.8	4.2	0.6
#	1970	280	UNION TRADING CO.	6.2	0.00	5	1950	546	2.28	2.28	0.00
#	1,760	740	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	11.3	7.27	12	2150	2255	1.05	1.10	0.05
#	5,500	5,220	JOR. WOOD IND. UNICO	26.9	2.02	1	100	496	5.22	4.96	0.26
#	2,200	670	KATL. CABLE WIRE, NYAC	31.9	0.00	14	13092	8543	6.7	6.8	0.1
#	1,470	1,150	JOR. SULPHUR-CHRM	13.5	0.00	2	700	259	3.7	3.7	0.0
#	1,260	530	UNIV. MOON. IND.	9.9	9.68	6	11200	6944	6.2	6.2	0.0
#	920	480	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	9	0.00	3	900	448	4.9	5.0	0.1
#	1,560	1,200	KATL. CHEMICALS	6.7	0.00	3	1400	1734	1.23	1.24	0.01
#	1,080	600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	8.9	15.87	10	20158	12499	6.2	6.2	0.0
#	1,540	1,150	KL - KAY READY WEAR	45.0	0.00	2	1250	1600	1.28	1.28	0.00
#	1,310	810	UNIV. TRADING	11.2	5.17	3	2400	2458	1.03	1.02	0.01
#	890	660	JORDAN STEEL	9.6	8.14	3	2400	2914	8.6	8.6	0.0
#	730	580	NAT. ADMINISTRATION	32.7	0.00	7	12019	8592	6.6	6.6	0.0
#	670	520	HIG. EAST COMPLEX	9.4	0.00	12	4750	2470	5.2	5.2	0.0
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 75.99 %CHG: +0.06 197 172852 201415											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 164.61 %CHG: +0.68 348 441349 1179354											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 11/10/1998											
N	1,050	820	EXPORT & PET. BUK. 751	15.2	0.00	6	22250	12792	83	82	0.01
N	490	270	CENTRAL DEV. STORAGE	9	0.00	2	5100	1530	30	30	0.00
N	800	500	UNION INV.	9	0.00	6	11122	5894	52	52	0.00
N	520	320	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	9	0.00	6	4500	1025	22	22	0.00
N	430	290	JOR. IND. MATCH-JENCO	9	0.00	1	250	22	12	12	0.00
N	430	200	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	24.2	0.00	11	24900	5298	21	21	0.00
N	210	120	KATL. TRADING	9	0.00	1	250	80	25	24	0.01
N	580	250	KATL. MULT. ENG. MANICO	9	0.00	39	56542	13718	25	25	0.00
N	2,160	1,190	UNION TOBACCO 87.51	12.4	5.92	4	2282	4520	2.12	2.11	0.01
N	720	570	KATL. TRADING	9	0.00	2	245	146	59	59	0.00
N	500	280	PELLEGE. INV. BK.	9	0.00	2	4750	950	20	20	0.00
N	660	330	IND. CERAMIC	6.9	0.00	1	200	68	22	24	0.02
N	950	540	ADVANCED PEANUT. IND.	9	0.00	1	200	114	56	57	0.01
N	500	280	PEANUT SAN. P. CORV.	9	0.00	9	2500	960	28	27	0.01
N	1,210	760	NUTRITION	9	0.00	11	12568	10596	81	78	0.02
GRAND TOTAL 102 149661 57724											
T : Saw 12 months high											
+ : Saw 12 months low											
# : Stock dividend during the past 12 months											
N : Listed during the past 12 months											
P : P/S ratio is 100 or more											
g : Negative P/S											
e : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year											

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Today looks slightly difficult, with problems at home demanding attention. Tuesday and Wednesday will be a lot more fun, but don't let it interfere with your work. Definitely put fun aside on Thursday and Friday. Accuracy is very important then. Relax over the weekend by doing whatever you want.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Comfort a loved one today and get the same back in return. Your stresses get worse before they get better, as you face a work-related decision Tuesday or Wednesday. Not to worry. You'll live through it. By Thursday or Friday, you'll be ready to celebrate. The weekend will be busy again, but by then it'll be more fun.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Don't throw your money around today. You'll feel better if you save it. Over the next few days, study ways to make your sweetheart happy. Fix up your place on Thursday and Friday so you can entertain romantically over the weekend. You'll be in the mood for love. Your significant other probably will be, too, so plan ahead.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) Someone doesn't want to mind you. Make sure you make your point, even if you have to say it three or four times. It'll be even harder tomorrow. On Thursday and Friday, an ally comes to your aid, but over the weekend a loved will get his or her way. Stop worrying. It'll be more fun than you expected, and probably not as expensive.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Pressure could get uncomfortable today, but don't despair. Tuesday and Wednesday are yours. Others will jump to do your bidding. Get practical on Thursday and Friday, and you can generate more income. Spend quickly but wisely on Saturday, and share your triumph with close friends and neighbours on Sunday.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Friends can help solve a financial dilemma, with advice rather than a loan. Follow it on Tuesday and Wednesday and you'll make your life easier. Towards the end of the week, offer suggestions and give a few orders yourself. You know what's really going on, so don't let the others make a mistake out of foolishness. On Sunday, indulge yourself.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Mind an older person today and you'll make points. Help out with a team effort on

Tuesday and Wednesday. The next few days are a little more difficult, as you tally your points. Neatness counts, too. You can relax on the weekend. You'll be awesome then. Besides, you'll have already won your game.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Let a foreigner into your heart today. You'll want to keep that one there for a long, long time. Find out what an older person wants on Tuesday, so you can provide it by Wednesday. You succeed through serving well on Thursday with the help of your friends. Put on the final touches Friday, and gather with buddies to celebrate Saturday.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Count your money, including what you can borrow. You may soon get an opportunity to do something you've always wanted. Looks like travel associated with education, so check out those options. Thursday and Friday, your career demands attention. There are a couple of excellent opportunities, so move quickly.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) You're facing challenge at work, but you can rise to the occasion. Make an older person's mind up and you could win the promotion. Count your money on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the other people's money too. Never hurts to know who has what. Wanderlust strikes Thursday through Saturday. See if you can get time off.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Travel is good all this week, so you really ought to be on vacation. If you still have a couple of things to do, finish them off quickly. Tuesday and Wednesday, a partner demands your attention. Shop for provisions Thursday and Friday. You'll get the best deals then. Launch your expedition on Saturday, and go through Sunday.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) An attractive person is watching you right now, but take care. The attention may cause conflict elsewhere in your life. Tuesday and Wednesday are intense workdays. Avoid an argument with your partner or Thursday or Friday. Reach an agreement with your mate on Saturday, then buy something you want together on Sunday.

Birthstone of September: Opal — Tourmaline

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## Olympic torch relay to start Australia's red centre

SYDNEY (AFP) — The Australian leg of the Olympic torch relay will begin its 100-day journey at 11 a.m. in the dead heart of the country, Olympics Minister Michael Knight said here Sunday.

The torch will be flown in a small plane to a remote area in Papua New Guinea on Oct. 8, 2000, more than 18 months before the start of the Sydney Games.

Commonwealth Games medalist sprinter Nova Kneebone will be the torch bearer and it will be carried around the heart of Australia, formerly known as Ayer's Rock near Alice Springs, by representatives of the traditional aborigines.

"Uluru is not only known worldwide, but is also a place of immense historical and cultural significance," Knight said at the official announcement at the Sydney Olympic Stadium.

Knight was flanked by traditional Aboriginal owners of Kata Tjuta National Park, which encompasses Uluru, as he made the announcement.

"Lots of areas had legitimate claims for the starting point but what better symbol of national unity could there be than to go to the very centre of our country," Knight said.

"It is in the geographical heart of Australia, is of great spiritual significance to many Australians and is part of the outback character of Australia."

The Olympic torch will be taken to all of Australia's states and territories on its route, which is designed to pass within one hour's drive of up to 93 per cent of Australia's 18 million population.



Games organisers have guaranteed that 75 per cent of the 10,000 torch bearers or 2,500 escort runners will be members of the Australian public with the remainder consisting of sponsors and officials.

## U.S. path to Sydney gets detour

COLORADO SPRINGS (AFP) — The United States has a new detour in plans to defend their Olympic basketball crown in 2000 at Sydney now that Mexico has backed out as host of a qualifying tournament.

The 1999 Tournament of the Americas had been set for Guadalajara next July 14-25 but Mexican organisers backed out and the Confederation of Pan American Basketball Associations (COPABA) seeks a new site.

Only two teams will qualify for Sydney from a field of eight to 10 and the U.S. team must reach the final to reach Sydney.

U.S. officials have not decided whether or not they should field a "Dream Team" lineup of NBA talent similar to the squads that brought home gold medals from Barcelona in 1992 and Atlanta in 1996.

USA Basketball will discuss the future at an annual meeting November 9 and 10 in Atlanta.

The NBA owners and players might still be locked in a labor fight by then. The season is unlikely to open November 3 as planned.

If the labor feud wipes out the entire season, U.S. officials might not be able to assemble an NBA team and might be left to make a qualifying effort with college or minor leaguers.

A minor league team placed third at the World Championships in Greece and a college team won the Goodwill Games.

The decision for 1999 would not be binding on the 2000 squad should the U.S. qualify a team, but officials will likely set one plan for the entire Sydney Olympic effort and stick with it.



The winner of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Filderstadt Sandrine Testud from France (R) and Lindsay Davenport from the United States Sunday lean on a Porsche convertible after the final in Filderstadt. Testud defeated Davenport 7-5 6-3 and won the car. (Reuters photo)

## Davenport brought down to earth by Testud

FILDERSTADT (AFP) — Sandrine Testud of France caused a major shock here on Sunday when she beat World No. 1 Lindsay Davenport of America 7-5, 6-3 after 1 hour and 11 minutes in the final of the \$450,000 WTA event.

It was the 26-year-old's second tournament success having won in Palermo last year and a rare reverse for the U.S. Open champion, who assumed top spot when Martina Hingis lost in Friday's quarter-finals.

The 18th-ranked Testud, who lost in

Prague to Jana Novotna in her only prior appearance in a final this season, came back from 5-4 down in the first set to take the next three games and the set, on her first set point, with a mixture of excellent passing shots and volleying.

The French player, who reached the U.S. Open quarter-finals last year, virtually assured herself of the title when she broke the 22-year-old second-seeded American to love to go 3-1 up and then held her nerve and serve to take the set 6-3.

## Agassi, Henman advance to final

BASEL (AP) — Fourth-seeded Andre Agassi defeated home favorite Marc Rosset in straight sets Saturday to move into the title match at the \$1 million Swiss Indoors where he will face Britain's Tim Henman.

Agassi received little resistance from the towering Swiss power-server, cruising through his semifinal 6-4, 6-2 in just 54 minutes.

Henman, seeded sixth, booked his place in the final by edging Sweden's Thomas Johansson 6-3, 2-6, 7-6 (7-5).

"The final should be a good one," said Agassi, who reached the title match without dropping a set.

"He'll pose a good challenge as an opponent and it should be an entertaining final. It's nice to see players of Tim Henman's class and professional style do so well."

Agassi dominated from the very start, never giving Rosset a chance to get into the match and stir support from the 8,700 Swiss spectators crowded into the St. Jakobshalle stadium.

The American broke Rosset's second serve in the opening set, then served two consecutive games at love in the second before breaking to take a 4-2 lead.

"I think I played very smart, very solidly," Agassi said.

"He's not an easy player to play. He's got a very

powerful serve, a very varied pace and he's unpredictable."

Organisers breathed a sigh of relief as the two remaining seeded players advanced to the final after early round devastation saw top-ranked and Wimbledon champ Pete Sampras, No. 2 and U.S. Open champ Patrick Rafter and Australian Open champion Petr Korda lose.

Agassi, however, was not interested in names or numbers.

"I'm not interested in playing Rafter or Pete," said Agassi. "I want to play the best players, and every week that changes."

"This week Rafter and Pete weren't the best. Tim Henman was."

Having Sampras lose so early could also help Agassi's chances of regaining the No. 1 spot after three years, completing an incredible comeback.

Ranked eighth on the ATP Tour, the 28-year-old American, who has just 68 points left to defend this season, is in a position to finish the year No. 1 in the world.

Agassi, who held the No. 1 ATP Tour ranking

in April 1995, fell to 141st last November and was out of the top 100 at the end of 1997 for the first time since he'd turned pro in 1985.

While Agassi has not won any Grand Slam or Super Nine titles this season, his 56-13 match record is the best on the ATP Tour in match victories and winning percentage.

"I'm not interested in being No. 1 at the end of the year," said Agassi, who won four titles this season, each without dropping a set. "I just want to establish myself as one of the best players going into the Australian Open."

"However, my main concern at the moment is Tim Henman."

Agassi is currently fifth in the ATP Tour World Championship standings, and his victory over Rosset could help cement his place among the top eight and secure for him a berth in the season-ending tournament next month.

Henman, who lost to Mark Philippoussis in the semifinals last year, extended his match winning streak to 11 with his victory over Johansson.

## Sydney Olympics committee awaits government backing on taxes

SYDNEY (AFP) — The Sydney Olympics budget would blow out to \$110 million (\$67 million) if the Australian government reneged on a promise to keep the games free of a new tax on goods and services, Olympics Minister Michael Knight said Sunday.

Knight said it would be extremely difficult to run the 2000 Games if the government was not honoured by the bid.

The Howard government was named to power last week's election with what it said was a mandate to run the country's voters to legislate and not to legislate.

"If the federal government went back on its commitment we would be degrading the quality of the games," Knight said here.

Knight, from the opposing Labor Party, raised concerns about the possibility of a GST on athletes' food and other services during the sporting showpiece.

"There is absolutely no way of recovering those costs — it would probably cost us another \$110 million," he said.

"What I would seek from (Treasurer) Peter Costello is an honouring of the government's commitment that (Games organisers) SOCOG doesn't pay sales tax, income tax and in the case of a GST replacing any of those taxes, we would expect not to be paying a GST."

Costello on Sunday said GST tax legislation had to be passed through both houses of parliament without

delay in order for it to be in place for the Olympics.

Costello said there was a window of opportunity to allow passage of the new tax laws and their timely implementation before September 2000 Olympics.

The GST is planned to be introduced on July 1, 2000.

"When Australians go to Olympics overseas, they pay value added taxes, they pay GST," he said on the Nine Network's Sunday program.

"Why would we not want people coming to Australia to make a contribution to taxes."

"So we decided it was important to have the GST in place before the Olympics."

## Sampras and Rafter lead Vienna entries

VIENNA (AFP) — The two top-ranked players in the world — American Pete Sampras and Australian Pat Rafter — head a strong entry for the \$800,000 Vienna Trophy ATP event which begins here on Monday.

Sampras and Rafter, who is chasing the American's No. 1 world ranking, both suffered shock early losses in this year's Basle tournament in Switzerland.

The Vienna tournament director Leo-Gunther Humer said the field, which features seven of the world's top 10 players, is the longest in the history of the event.

Sampras, who lost to South African Wayne Ferreira, who stunned Sampras in the first round, said: "I'm ready to do everything right here."

Another outstanding match-up features No. 7 seed Andre Agassi of Russia against 14th-ranked, but seeded, Briton Greg Rusedski.

Eighth-seeded Tim Henman of Britain opens against Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson.

For the first time in 10 years, local favourite Thomas Muster, the former World No. 1 now ranked 23rd, is not among the eight seeds for the event.

Muster faces a dangerous-looking first-round task against 11th-ranked Dutchman Jan Siemerink.

The seeds: 1. Pete Sampras (USA), 2. Patrick Rafter (AUS), 3. Carlos Moya (Spa), 4. Petr Korda (Cze), 5. Karol Kucera (Svk), 6. Richard Krajicek (Ned), 7. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus), 8. Tim Henman (Gbr).

## Padres on verge of return to World Series

SAN DIEGO (AFP) — The San Diego Padres moved within one game of their first World Series since 1984 with a 4-1 victory over Atlanta here Saturday in the National League Championship Series.

The Padres, who lost to Detroit in their only previous trip to the World Series, took a three-games-to-one lead in the best-of-seven series, with two more chances to wrap it up at home on Sunday and, if necessary, Monday.

Starter Sterling Hitchcock pitched five solid innings and four relievers kept Atlanta in check as the Braves — who won 106 games in the regular season — left the bases loaded without scoring in three innings.

No team has ever rallied from a 3-0 deficit to win a best-of-seven post-season series. But the Padres were trying not to let that go to their heads.

"We have to be level-headed about this," said Padres manager Bruce Bochy. "It's a good feeling, but we have to go out there and get number four."

The Padres took the lead with two runs in the fifth off Atlanta's four-time Cy Young Award-winner Greg Maddux, and added two more in the eighth.

Hitchcock, bating second with one out in the fifth, singled off Maddux. Quilvio Vera was thrown out at first. Then Steve Finley doubled to center to score Hitchcock. Tony Gwynn was walked and Finley scored from second on Ken Caminiti's single.

Atlanta had a chance to rebound in the top of the sixth. Hitchcock walked first baseman Andres Galarraga and was relieved by Donnie Wall.

Outfielder Andrew Jones singled off Wall, and both runners advanced on Eddie Perez's sacrifice bunt. Wall walked pinch hitter Ryan Klesko to load the bases with one out, then struck out pinch hitters Michael

Tucker and Greg Colbrunn.

The Braves had taken a 1-0 lead in the third on shortstop Walt Weiss' RBI single. Gerald Williams struck out and Weiss stole second. Chipper Jones lined a two-out single to left field and Weiss was thrown out at the plate by left fielder John Vander Wal to end the inning.

Atlanta missed a chance to extend their lead in the next inning, when Hitchcock retired Maddux with two outs and the bases loaded.

The Braves had another opportunity in the eighth, but ironclad closer Trevor Hoffman came in with two outs and the bases loaded and struck out Javier Lopez with three pitches.

"Tremendous job by the bullpen," Bochy said. "We were on the ropes a few times, we know it. Our pitchers, they did a great job when the game was on the line."

San Diego stretched their lead by two in the eighth thanks to a double by Carlos Hernandez that Ryan Klesko mishandled in left field. Jojy's error let Wally Joyner score and Hernandez reach third, then scored on a passed ball by

Lopez.

The Braves have scored just three runs in the series, something manager Bobby Cox says will have to change if they are to rally to rewrite the history books.

"It's not the pitching," said Cox, whose his other two Cy Young winners, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz, fell prey to San Diego to games one and two.

"We need a couple of hits. We have good matchups going into situations and we can't leave the bases loaded every inning without doing some damage."

Even so, Cox wasn't ready to admit defeat.

"We can make it interesting. Win tomorrow, win Monday and go home with two. You can still make it really, really interesting."

Barring a miracle comeback, Atlanta will add another chapter to a legacy of playoff frustration in the 1990s.

This is the Braves' seventh consecutive trip to the National League championship series but they have produced only one World Series title, that coming in 1995.

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## Taleban chief insists on U.N. envoy's visit to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — A Taleban delegation held two sessions with the United Nations special envoy here Sunday but no headway has been reported in resolving an ongoing Iran-Afghan dispute.

The Taleban delegation led by the Islamic militia's chief spokesman Wakil Ahmad discussed U.N.-Taleban relations with the U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said. Ahmad stressed the Iran-Afghan conflict did not come up for discussion, it said.

He also explained the measures taken by the Taleban to facilitate the work of U.N. agencies in Afghanistan, AIP said.

The United Nations withdrew most of its staff after the killing of a U.N. official in Kabul after the Aug. 20 U.S. cruise missile strikes on suspected terrorist camps in eastern Afghanistan.

Ahmad, who is chief spokesman of the Taleban leader Mulla Mohammad Omar, also informed the U.N. envoy about the investigations into the killing of the U.N. official, AIP said.

Omar earlier renewed his demand that the U.N. special envoy visit the frontline militia's Kandahar headquarters for talks on Iran-Afghan tensions.

Ahmad told the AIP that in his invitation Omar

assured Ibrahim the "Taleban will cooperate with the U.N. mission" in defusing tension with Iran.

The reclusive Taleban leader also expressed the hope that Ibrahim's mission would promote peace and stability in the region, Ahmad said.

No reaction was immediately available from U.N. sources.

AIP said Ahmad had assured the U.N. delegation of security. Ibrahim was to convey his response after consulting the U.N. headquarters later Sunday.

However after second round Ahmad told AIP he was now expecting the U.N. response on Monday.

Ahmad arrived in Islamabad Saturday in a special plane sent by Pakistan in a bid to persuade the Taleban to drop its insistence that Ibrahim visit Kandahar for the meeting.

The U.N. envoy, who is accompanied by Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Ibrahim Bakr, arrived here Thursday after talks with Iranian officials in Tehran.

Kandahar was not on his itinerary because U.N. officials are not authorised to visit Afghanistan for security reasons.

The U.N. envoy also held talks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz on Saturday. Officials said they

discussed a "road map" for future action to restore normality on the Iran-Afghan frontier.

During the meeting Aziz explained Pakistan's efforts to defuse tension between the "brotherly countries of Iran and Afghanistan." Iran has massed thousands of Revolutionary Guards and troops along the Afghan border and the Taleban have reportedly taken counter measures.

A border clash occurred four days ago between the two sides. The Taleban said two people were killed and five others injured on Afghan territory.

Omar meanwhile agreed to release 10 more Iranian prisoners as Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat joined efforts to mediate between Iran and Afghanistan, AIP said.

The announcement was made as a goodwill gesture for Arafat whose special envoy Mohammad Khader held talks with Omar in Kandahar on Sunday, it said.

Taleban last month freed 15 Iranians captured after the militia's triumphs in northern Afghanistan held by the opposition. It was not immediately clear if Arafat's envoy, who also held talks with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz will visit Tehran also.



ANTI-SERBIA BUILD-UP: One of six U.S. B-52 bombers flies into RAF Fairford Airbase arriving from their base in Louisiana on Saturday as part of a build-up of NATO forces for eventual deployment against Serbia. NATO ministers on Monday will meet to authorise airstrikes (see page 4 stories) (AFP photo)

## Cohen plays down concern on Sharon post

ABU DHABI (R) — U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen on Sunday played down Arab fears about the appointment of hawkish Ariel Sharon as Israel's foreign minister, saying it sometimes took a more conservative figure to strike peace deals.

"Sometimes it takes hawkish or more conservative people in order to reach agreements. I think time will tell," Cohen said in the United Arab Emirates during his tour of Gulf Arab states.

He told a news conference that significant progress had been made in efforts to reach an interim accord between Israel and the Palestinians with three meetings in recent weeks between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

Cohen said the fact that the two leaders would go to Washington this week for

summit talks "offers us some hope that there can be real progress made on peace in the Middle East."

Sharon's appointment as foreign minister on Friday has angered the Arab World because of his hardline stance that includes championing Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

At the end of his three-hour visit to the UAE, Cohen indicated that there had been significant advances on a planned deal for the Gulf state to buy 80 F-16 fighters from the United States.

"I did not come to make any deals or offer deals," he said. The UAE announced in May that it planned to buy the warplanes from U.S. company Lockheed Martin Corp. in a deal worth about \$6 billion.

Defence officials accompanying Cohen said there had been no significant discussion of the deal on Sunday, but

described it as "basically done" with only technical details remaining to be worked out.

Cohen said his talks with UAE President Sheikh Zaid Ben Sultan Al Nahayan and other top officials covered potential threats to the region from Iran and Iraq, and threats from weapons of mass destruction. He also discussed bilateral ties.

The defence secretary reaffirmed to Abu Dhabi the message he is delivering throughout his six-nation tour that while Washington would like to improve relations with the reformist Iranian government of President Mohammad Khatami it was still waiting for changes in Tehran's foreign policy.

Cohen said Iran had still not given up support for terrorism and efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Turning to the flare-up in

tensions between Iran and Afghanistan's Taleban rulers, Cohen said that it was "something Iran will have to resolve with the Taleban. We have no position in that particular conflict."

A tense standoff between Iran and the Taleban over the killing of Iranian diplomats and a journalist two months ago erupted into a cross-border clash on Thursday.

Cohen also took a neutral line on the dispute between Turkey and Syria, saying Washington respected the territorial rights of each country and hoped the issue would be resolved peacefully.

"Turkey has charged Syria with supporting Turkish Kurd rebels. Syria has denied the allegations."

Cohen was heading for Oman later on Sunday. He has already visited Bahrain and Qatar and was to travel on to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### More than 100 dead of malaria in Yemen

SANAA (AP) — An outbreak of malaria has left more than 100 people, mostly children, dead and has infected another 1,600 people in southern and western Yemen, health officials said Sunday. During the past two weeks, the province of Al Dali, 250 kilometres south of the capital Sanaa, has recorded 1,500 cases of malaria, while the town of Rima, 150 kilometres west of Sanaa, has recorded 100, health officials said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. More than 100 people already have died of malaria in those two areas, health officials said. Malaria is spread by mosquitoes that breed in pools of stagnant water.

#### Lebanese wounded in guerrilla shelling

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Lebanese guerrillas fired mortar shells and rockets into Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon on Sunday, wounding a Lebanese man, security officials said. The guerrilla attack came a day after Israeli troops killed two guerrillas from the Iranian-backed Hizbollah group. Karim Atwi, 29, and Mohammad Hammoud, 23, were killed Saturday in a clash with Israeli troops near Rihan. Hizbollah said. Officials of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) said the men were trying to sneak into the village in the zone Israel occupies.

#### Jewish leaders slam Pope on canonisation

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Jewish leaders on Sunday condemned Pope John Paul II's canonisation of a nun who converted to Christianity from Judaism and died in the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz. The Pope canonised German-born Edith Stein, later Sister Benedicta of the Cross, at the Vatican on Sunday. "It's outrageous. This is a very public slap in the face to the Jewish community," said Efraim Zuroff head of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre at occupied Jerusalem office. "The Pope is sending an extremely negative message to the Jewish community that in the eyes of the Catholic Church the best Jews are those that convert to Catholicism," he told Reuters. Stein, who studied philosophy and had a brilliant academic career, was born in 1891 to a Jewish family in what is now the Polish city of Wroclaw. She abandoned her Jewish faith at the age of 14 and became an atheist for about 10 years. She later converted to Christianity.

#### S. Arabia trying to join WTO

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Trade Minister Ossama Ben Jaafar Al Faqih said Sunday that his country was endeavouring to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the official SPA news agency reported. "Saudi Arabia is deploying high-level efforts to obtain the support of friendly countries for its bid for WTO membership," Faqih said during a meeting in Riyadh of the Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry. "A Saudi government delegation has already had four rounds of negotiations as part of these efforts and a fifth session is planned for November 16-20 at WTO headquarters in Geneva."

#### Lightning claims five lives

RIYADH (AFP) — Five people have been killed and another five injured in lightning strikes across southwest Saudi Arabia, Al Jazeera newspaper reported on Sunday. It said the casualties were residents of Jizan province, which was also whipped by heavy rains on Friday and Saturday. The storms destroyed several farms and hundreds of cattle drowned.

#### Air Algeria staff ease strike

ALGIERS (R) — Air Algerie's workers on Sunday eased a strike that had paralysed airports across Algeria and were preparing for a vote on whether to return to work, union officials said. "This morning [one] third of the normally scheduled planes took off for Marseille, Brussels and other foreign destinations as well as domestic routes," said an airport official. "That means more than 15 flights were ensured at Algiers airport for the day," he added. State-run radio said the strike had also eased at airports in the western city of Oran, Constantine, in the east and in the oil-producing town of Hassi Messaoud. Representatives of the strikers held talks with the airline's managers on Saturday night to try to end the stoppage which had paralysed airport traffic since Monday.

## Israel defends shooting of journalist

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli army said on Sunday a photographer who was seriously wounded when troops fired rubber-coated metal bullets at Palestinian stone throwers had not been identified as a journalist because he had no protective gear.

It said an inquiry by the commander of its forces in the West Bank city of Hebron into last Thursday's incident had ascertained that "soldiers identified the journalists who wore helmets and flak jackets."

"The photographer who was shot was not wearing a helmet or a flak jacket and thus he was not identified by the soldiers," it said in a letter to the Foreign Press Association (FPA).

The FPA had protested that the shooting of Husam Abu Alan, a Palestinian photographer for the French news agency Agence France-Presse, was "indiscriminate." He was shot in the head.

## Butler: Iraq has always lied on VX gas

DUBAI (AFP) — U.N. arms inspection chief Richard Butler has accused Iraq of lying on the issue of the lethal nerve agent VX and said it has still not come clean.

"Iraq's style is the following, whether it's in the biological or chemical field: it starts with a denial" that it possesses banned arms, Butler told the London-based Arabic newspaper Al Hayat in an interview published on Sunday.

"When it realises it can't continue any more, it admits the error but owns up to the minimum," he said.

"That's what they did on their biological arms programme, and that's what they are now doing on the subject of VX," said the chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of dismantling Iraq.

Butler charged that "Iraq has lied to us from the start on the subject of VX by stating that it never produced the nerve agent."

"When we confronted them with proof, they admitted to having produced only 200 litres before acknowledging that almost four tonnes were produced," said the UNSCOM chief.

He said a meeting of international experts due on Oct. 22-23 in New York would determine whether Iraq had been able to equip missiles with VX.

Tests carried out by a U.S. army laboratory showed traces of VX on Iraqi missile warheads, but further tests in Switzerland came up negative. Butler said he was still awaiting the results of French tests.

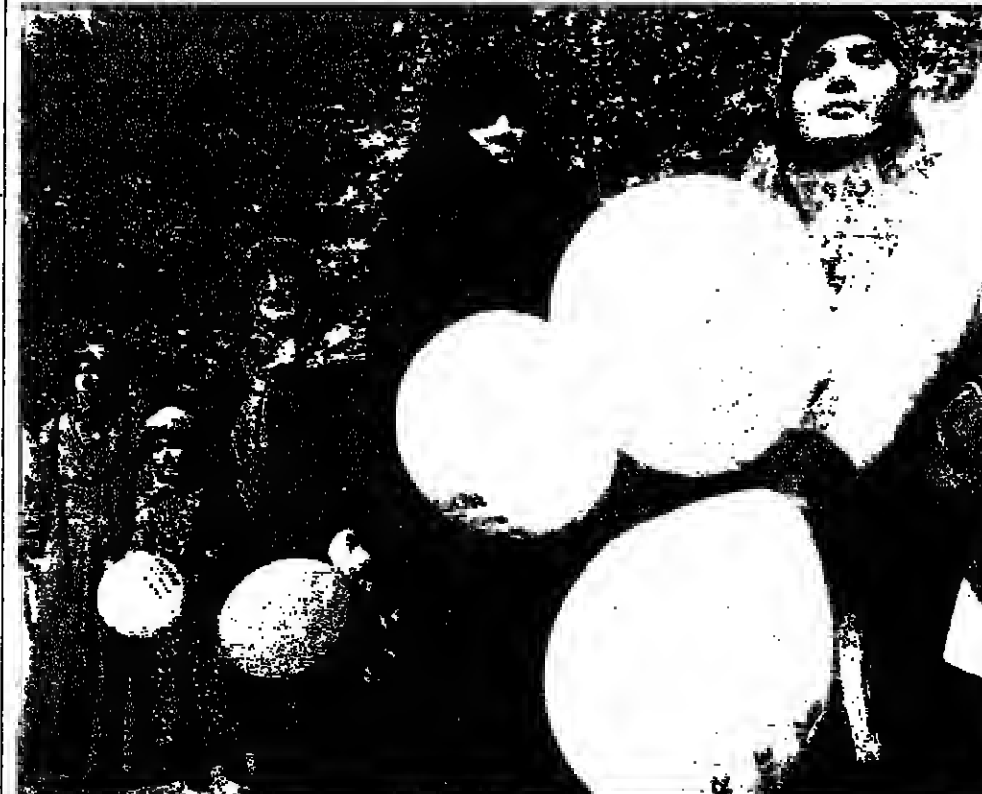
Earlier this week, a U.N. diplomat confirmed to AFP a report in the New York Times charging that traces of chemicals linked to VX had been found on the warhead remains by the French

laboratory.

"The game the French are playing is a high-risk game," the U.N. diplomat said, referring to suspicions also aired in the Times that France had delayed releasing the final results to prevent undermining calls for a comprehensive review of U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

Under Security Council resolutions adopted after the 1991 Gulf war, the sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait cannot be lifted until U.N. weapons inspectors have declared it free of weapons of mass destruction.

## Turkish police arrest 200 Islamist demonstrators



Turkish women link hands as they march in human chains during a silent protest in downtown Istanbul on Sunday. Tens of thousands of Islamists joined hands as they marched in major cities to protest a secular ban on wearing Islamic-style head scarves in schools and public offices (AP photo)

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish police Sunday arrested over 200 Islamist demonstrators during rallies held throughout the country to protest against a ban on the Islamic headscarf in universities, the Anatolia news agency said.

More than 100,000 people attended the rallies organised by several pro-Islamic organisations in Ankara, Istanbul and nearly 20 other major Turkish cities and towns, the agency said.

In the southern city of Gaziantep, the police arrested more than 100 protesters after they failed to obey an order to disperse peacefully.

Another 100 people were arrested in rallies in other cities in which several parliamentary deputies from the pro-Islamic Virtue Party also took part.

The protests were prompted by a recent decision by the rectors of

Turkey's 50 universities to bar female students from wearing Islamic headscarves on university premises.

Mehmet Elkatmis, a Virtue deputy, told an Ankara rally: "The ban represents a violation of the constitution which guarantees basic freedoms." Virtue is currently the largest party in the 550-seat Turkish parliament.

The Turkish state structure, led by the powerful pro-secular army, has in the last 18 months been fighting against the country's pro-Islamic movement which the military accuses of seeking to destroy the secular regime.

### Lennon poem earns \$5,350 at auction

LONDON (AP) — A four-mouthed poem written by the late Beatle John Lennon earned \$5,350 at auction Saturday for the fan who received it almost 30 years ago. The typed work, made up of a four-letter expletive repeated 104 times and the single word "you," was sent to poet Susan Baker in 1969 after she wrote to Lennon requesting a poem. Signed and titled by Lennon and countersigned by his wife, Yoko Ono, it consists of the four-letter word arranged in seven columns with "you" at the centre of the middle column.

### Corman to produce 'Nightfall' in India

HYDERABAD (AP) — Producer and director Roger Corman has announced a science fiction project in a sprawling southern Indian film complex, which he says will cost half what it would in Hollywood. The film, "Nightfall," will be based on a short story by science fiction writer Isaac Asimov about a planet which has six suns and never sees night. Corman told reporters Thursday in Hyderabad, the capital of the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. Corman owns the production company Concorde-New Horizon.

### 'It's all about making money'

KINGSTON (AP) — A new album of previously unreleased Bob Marley songs may be causing a stir overseas but not in Jamaica, where some fans of the reggae legend are crying exploitation. Since its release several months ago, "The Complete Bob Marley and the Wailers: 1967-72" has earned rave reviews during promotional stops in Canada and the United Kingdom, but not in the home country of the late reggae star. Sales have been slow in Jamaica. "Bob most likely would not have wanted these songs released," said Dermot Hussey, a Jamaican musicologist. "It's all about making money."

### Couple proves a perfect match for kidney transplant

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Judy and Jesse Paluck celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary dressed in hospital gowns and surgical stockings, barely able to muster the strength to hold hands. For the Palucks, the setting and the gift Judy offered — a kidney — couldn't have been more romantic: it proved they were a perfect match. "I think we were meant for each other and were meant to go through this," Mrs. Paluck, 29, said Friday, a day after donating a kidney to her 32-year-old husband. "That it happened so close to our anniversary is a sign."

### Twins born three months apart reach fourth birthday

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Celeste Keys knows her birthday is in "January." What she doesn't understand is why she won't turn 4 when her twin brother does on Thursday. But Timothy, her twin, got her to stop crying about it. "Don't be upset," he said. "I'll buy you a birthday on my birthday." Celeste was born at full term Jan. 18, 1994, a record three months and three days after Timothy's premature birth on Oct. 15. Their father, the Rev. Thomas Keys, called it a miracle. It's just as great an accomplishment that Timothy apparently has escaped prematurity's many dangers, including learning disorders.

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By Alta A. Twokan